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SACRIFICE

ITS PROPHECY AND FULFILMENT

THE BAIRD LECTURE 1892-93

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THE BAIRD LECTURE FOR 1892-93

BY

ARCHIBALD SCOTT, D.D.

MINISTER OF ST. GEORGE'S, EDINBURGH

AUTHOR OF 'BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY: A PARALLEL AND A CONTRAST'

EDINBURGH

DAVID DOUGLAS, 10 CASTLE STREET

1894

TO

The Congregation of St. George's

TO WHOM MANY IDEAS IN THESE LECTURES MUST BE

FAMILIAR

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED

IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF THEIR GENEROUS SYMPATHY

BY

THEIR MINISTER

PREFACE

WERE I to name all the authors to whom I have been indebted for material assistance in the preparation of the following lectures, I should require a very large list. The theme was suggested more than thirty years ago by Archbishop Trench's *Hulsean Lectures* (1846) upon "Christ the Desire of all Nations, or, the Unconscious Prophecies of Heathendom." That work powerfully impressed me at the time, and it has given direction to much of my reading ever since. It sent me to study the "Εὐαγγελικὴ Προπαρασκευὴ" of Eusebius and other works of the early fathers of the Church; to admire and profit by the vast stores of information available in the magnificent folios of English scholars like Spencer, Selden, Lightfoot, and Warburton, and so it prepared me to welcome with thankfulness the ever multiplying literature which the study of Comparative Religion has produced in our generation. I am not ashamed to confess that the great world of belief and thought represented by the

Prè-Christian and Non-Christian religions has always had for me a peculiar attraction : “ *Homo sum ; humani nihil a me alienum puto.*”¹

It should be no surprise to any one to discover that our religion is not marked off and differentiated from all other religions by hard lines of antagonism. It is indeed as distinct from, and as superior to heathenism, as the mountain is unlike to and is above the plain ; but Christianity so reaches down to heathenism, and heathenism so aspires towards Christianity that it is difficult sometimes to say where the plain ends and the mountain begins. This is just what the Founder of our religion and its earliest Apostolic interpreters instructed us to expect. Christianity is a Divine revelation to humanity as a whole ; its fundamental truth is the organic unity of the human race ; and its Divine purpose is the reconciliation of all things unto God by His Son. This revelation is given to us through One who is essentially Divine and thoroughly human. One who manifests not God *and* man, but God *in* man, and man *in* God ; God-Man so truly one, that Man thinks only what God knows, does only what God wills, and desires only what God delights in. “I and the Father are one.”²

No believer in the Gospel truth of the unity of humanity, and in God’s purpose of “reconciling all

¹ Terence, *Heauton.*, act i. scene 1, line 25.

² John x. 30.

things unto Himself by Christ," need be alarmed at the application, even to religion, of the modern theory of evolution. Like all new theories it is unfortunate in many of its expounders, who find in it only another weapon for running a tilt against "the faith." As rightly apprehended, however, the word evolution describes only a method and not an originating principle. Evolution creates nothing; but creation may proceed through evolution. Evolution at best only explains the ways in which the Creative mind or spirit works, and discloses the stages through which the creative purpose is displayed.¹ The theory is not incompatible with Scripture, which traces the principle of the unity of the world to where modern philosophy under different terms has found it, in the intelligence and will of Deity. Moreover, the idea suggested by it seems to be kindred to, and to follow naturally from, the idea of the unity of humanity. If it be a fact that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men,"² or that God "made of one every nation of men,"³ then it follows that humanity everywhere will testify to or manifest its Divine Original. As matter of fact, humanity does not manifest Him uniformly or always in the same degree. In its lowest grade, that in which he is nearest to the animal, man exhibits traces of

¹ Martineau, *Essays, Reviews, and Addresses*, vol. iv. p. 257.

² Acts xvii. 26.

³ Revised Version.

what is divine: but it is not in that grade, but in the very highest—that in which humanity is seen at its divinest—that there is clearly disclosed what man originally was designed to be. The creative ideal of humanity is thus revealed in Christ, and in that “image,” after that “likeness,” God in this period of the history of the universe is creating man anew, through spiritual regeneration, from a very evil condition. When we consider the facts disclosed in that condition, we find that no other term than “regeneration” can adequately suggest the Divine process: and it seems strange that some who would discard the term from theology, appropriate it in sociology as the only one adequate to describe special human improvement and unexpected national revival.¹ So without accepting or rejecting the theory of evolution in religion, we may regard it without anxiety. Instead of being another difficulty to faith, it may prove to be a real aid to faith. For it may suggest the method whereby the Almighty and Omniscient Worker—whose “years are throughout all generations,” and whose working is not confined to what goes on in this world—will eventually realise His eternal purpose, and prove that

¹ For example, we read of “renaissance” in art or literature, of the “regeneration” of society, and, as in the case of Italy, of the “resurrection” of a nation; yet in the light of Providence, in all

these changes, we are witnesses of an outflow of the same creative spirit which in Christ is recreating the race, and is making all things new.

in spite of man's present evil condition God has "not made man for nought."

In any case, in Christ, towards whose advent "all the movement of the ancient world had been converging," and from whose advent "all the modern world has started,"¹ we have the pledge that however appalling may be the present evil condition of the human race, the most perplexing of the Divine dealings with mankind—or rather the seeming lack of Divine dealing—will be justified by their adaptations and effects when seen in the light of a completed dispensation. To those who believe that God is immanent in, and is divinely directing humanity, the life and death of Christ at first appear to be the most inexplicable of mysteries. Christ's experience of human life seems to indicate the existence of no benign Providence, or if so, of a Providence not regnant as they expected, but defeated and baffled. And yet when contemplated from the standpoint of Christ, we find that out of this greatest darkness of human history light has arisen, in which the Crucifixion is disclosed as the guarantee of Divine victory in the redemption of humanity. It is not the horror but the glory of the Cross that now fills our souls. In that most appalling exhibition of human cruelty and guilt, we find the grandest manifestation of Divine benignity and power. We have revealed in it the real relation of the Creator

¹ Prof. Edward Caird, *The Evolution of Religion*, vol. ii. p. 266.

to the evil that is in His universe; for we learn from it that if God was to be in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, He could not be in Him in any other fashion. It behoved Christ thus to suffer, and in the increasing light which is being shed upon us by that death, and by Christ's resurrection and ascension, we feel that everything inexplicable in Providence has its meaning, and especially that our poor diseased, corrupt humanity is quietly but surely being restored and healed by One who has a balm for its every wound.

These lectures represent a humble but earnest endeavour to exhibit a little of the significance and purpose of the Mission and Passion of Christ, as disclosed by their adaptation to the religious necessities of mankind. They are not meant to form a treatise either upon sacrifice in general, or upon the system of Hebrew sacrifice in particular. Into discussions as to the symbolic and typical import of the Hebrew system of sacrifice they do not enter, for I accept the interpretation given of the religious institutions of the previous economy by the writers of the Old and New Testaments. I have simply attempted to sketch, in popular language, that is, language plain and free from scientific and technical terms, the essential ideas underlying and suggested by the most prominent forms of sacrifice in all grades of religion that we are acquainted with, from the lowest to the highest. My object has been to show

that the desires and beliefs of man at his best, in any and in all stages of religious experience, are really prophecies; and that these prophecies have found, and are increasingly finding, their fulfilment in Christ. He is satisfying the desires of every living man. By the "once offering up" of Himself for our salvation, He has abolished the necessity for material sacrifices and offerings, and yet, by drawing us into fellowship with His sufferings for us, He is rendering imperative to the love in us which His own love has evoked, the perpetual thank-offering of our holy living selves to God. So what seemed for long only a means devised to secure a great and worthy end, is discovered by those who believe in Christ and rest upon Him alone for salvation, to be the highest end of all. For the rule or example of Christ's life is the moral law of the Christian, and this moral law, originating in the being and blessedness of God, is essential and absolute sacrifice.

Very likely I have failed in my object; indeed I am painfully conscious of the defects of my work, which has had to be done in such intervals as could be snatched from a very busy professional life; but surely it is well to have tried. And so, thankful for the opportunity, I venture to send the lectures forth, in the hope that they may help to bring into the lives of others something of the comfort which I have experienced in preparing them.

I record my heartiest thanks to my friend Mr. Campbell of Stracathro, who has generously rendered very valuable assistance in correcting and revising the proofs.

ARCHIBALD SCOTT.

EDINBURGH, *14th December* 1893.

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LECTURE I

INTRODUCTORY

THE dominant personality in humanity is Jesus Christ, and the most outstanding fact in history is His crucifixion. No other life has excited so great admiration and wonder, no other death has occasioned so prolonged and ardent controversy to account for its consequences. He had scarcely vanished from the gaze of men before His life began to be represented as that of a defeated religious reformer, whose death was simply a lamentable catastrophe marking the untimely end of one who had endeavoured, like many other martyrs, to "fulfil great hopes at the wrong time, or in impracticable ways." Yet after eighteen centuries of similar attempts to minimise their significance, the awe inspired by the life and death of Jesus is deeper than ever, and by increasing multitudes in each successive generation His cross is accepted as the symbol of their faith, and the divine pledge of their salvation.

Although the discussion is still proceeding—and indeed is being waged with greater earnestness than ever—

it has already yielded some very important results. For example, historical criticism has decided that Jesus as presented in the Gospels is no fiction. Whatever questions may still be pending as to the structure of these narratives themselves, there is no longer any question as to the reality of their subject. Jesus, in the marvellous purity and sublimity of character there unconsciously delineated, is admitted to be a fact by even anti-Christian writers. The reverence of the unbelieving world for Jesus is steadily increasing. Now, when we consider the conditions of time and place under which Jesus appeared, the country, and especially the people from whom He was supposed to have sprung, we find that a vast deal is involved in this admission. It means that in a period of general corruption, of moral and religious declension which law and philosophy were powerless to arrest or remedy, one emerged from the prevailing depravity in the likeness of sinful flesh, who could confidently challenge the world to convict Him of a single fault or indiscretion. Characterised by no idiosyncrasy, for all the qualities that mark ideals of character were harmoniously exhibited in Him,—manlier than the bravest man, tenderer than the gentlest woman,—He confronted the world as a new type in whom there was neither “Jew nor Gentile, neither male nor female.”¹ Alone of all good men, who in proportion to their goodness have invariably confessed their evil and deplored their hard struggle to do their duty, He felt no struggle, and owned to no defeat. Never did there

¹ Galatians iii. 28.

escape from His lips a single confession of sin, or one prayer for pardon for Himself; and yet, though He acknowledged and felt no sin in Himself, the sins of others affected Him more grievously than they affected sinners themselves. As He grew in experience, sorrow for the sinfulness of others became a burden heavier than He could bear, for it involved Him in an agony unapproachable by all other human beings, and at last in a death due far less to the pangs of crucifixion than to the anguish of a broken heart.¹

A life so unique cannot be estimated by the measure of a man; it cannot be accounted for upon the principles by which we endeavour to explain human nature and history. Its exceptional character implies an exceptional origin. Life, like water, cannot rise higher than its source. If He were only the outgrowth of humanity the failings that are inseparable from humanity would have manifested themselves in Him, so that while proving Himself to be the best of men, He would have shown Himself to be only a man at the best. When, however, we observe that the sinfulness universal in humanity could not touch Him, except in the way of causing Him unparalleled grief, we feel that we contemplate in Him a new phenomenon. He is no more the "product of the age" than the sun is the product of the darkness which it bursts and chases away. Nor is He the result and fruit of the "best forces of

¹ Cp. Dr. Stroud, *The Physical Cause of the Death of Christ*. London: Hamilton and Adams, ed. 1847, 1871. Rev. Samuel

Haughton, M.D., *Church Quarterly Review*, January 1880, reprinted in *The Speaker's Commentary on 1 John*, pp. 349-50.

human nature matured in a long series of antecedent ages." Even after eighteen centuries of ever-enriching experience, no one expects humanity to produce such a man as Jesus of Nazareth. By universal confession He is far greater than the Church which He founded, transcending alike the imagination and the faith of His followers. He is still a fact which no science of man, no philosophy of history has accounted for. He is "The Wonderful," in truth the greatest wonder that has occurred in the world since the first appearance of man. Tried by the standards of the creatures beneath him, man is found to be the miracle of nature; for while he is all that nature beneath him is, he is what the most highly developed natural outgrowth, by no training, however patient and skilful, by no process of selection, however prolonged, has ever been observed to become. In like manner, when tried by the standard of man, Jesus Christ is the great miracle of humanity. Manifesting in our nature a holiness such as never was conceived by the purest imagination of the saints, He confronts us in the evolution of the Divine purpose not as a product of nature or humanity, but as a sign of transition or revolution, in reality an incarnation, through whom there is introduced into human history a higher standard of character and a new principle of life.

When we examine into the significance and purpose of this miracle, and inquire what eternal interests were at stake in creation requiring the manifestation of Jesus, we get the answer not only reflected from His

person, but uttered in His words, with unmistakable clearness. We learn at once that we have to do with no mere prophet or reformer who had been raised up to promote the education of men by correcting their errors and enlarging the spheres of their knowledge. He is, in the peculiar simplicity and sublimity of His faith—that is, of His absolute and loving surrender to God as His Father—a witness against man as he is. At the same time, in His peculiar holiness and power, He is a prophecy and pledge of what man may be. It is manifest that nowhere and at no point of his history has man realised the ideal of his nature. On the contrary, both “in himself and in society and in the outward world there is a hostile element ever working to warp and corrupt that ideal.”¹ Only potentially or ultimately can man be described as *made* “in the image and after the likeness of God.” By whatever theory we endeavour to account for his present condition, it is undeniable that he requires supernatural aid to educate, ay, to keep him from decline. It is a fact of his natural life that, though conscious of a moral law, he breaks it upon the very first temptation, through his self-assertion to the corrupting or undoing of his original nature.² In Christ we learn how very far man is from being what man was meant to be, and from Christ we learn that if the original ideal is to be realised it must be through the surrender of our own work and will to the control of a will higher than ours. Man cannot *grow* into, he must be *made* in the image and after the

¹ *Colloquia Crucis*, p. 48. ² Driver, *Sermons on Old Testament*, p. 24.

likeness of God. So Christ taught us that He came from our Creator His Father to undo our unmaking of ourselves. We are "lost," and He had come to "find" us; we are in bondage, and He was seeking to deliver and redeem us; we are diseased and perishing, and He was attempting to heal and "save" us. And this, not by relieving us from the necessary burdens of existence or from the consequences of our wrongdoing by improving the present world or by removing us to a better, but by working in us such a regeneration of character as would amount to a new creation, in which, reconciled with God, we should share the Divine life and enjoy His blessedness.

The same clearness characterises His declarations of the method by which this purpose was to be effected. From the very outset He foresaw that His mission would involve Him in persecution, and finally in death upon the cross; yet straight to the cross as to His proper goal He steadily travelled, conscious that in suffering upon it He would fulfil the very work which He came into the world to do. Instead, therefore, of referring to His crucifixion as a painful necessity which He must reluctantly endure, He uniformly pointed to it as a seal of His Messiahship. "His death was something more in His own mind than the inevitable consequence of His fidelity to the truth, and of His antagonism to the corruption of the times. It was His intention to die for men, because His death was necessary for human redemption."¹ Therefore, Son of the

¹ Dale, *The Atonement*, The Congregational Union Lecture for 1875, p. lv, Preface.

Highest, He had come in the form and after the fashion in which He was manifested ; voluntarily shorn of glory, emptied of fulness ; not to rule, but to obey ; not “to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.”¹

Christ’s testimony concerning the purpose of His mission appears to be consistent with its character and its close ; while if it be discredited or rejected, His whole life, and especially His sufferings and death, remain insoluble enigmas. Our chief difficulties with regard to the Sacrifice of Christ originate in our conceptions of Divine justice. That the innocent should suffer for the guilty would be a contradiction of the Divine righteousness, as expressed in the law—“the soul that sinneth it shall die, but the righteous shall live by his righteousness.”² Now that law is eternal, and it operates in Providence as unchangeably and inexorably as the law of gravitation in nature. The law of gravitation, however, like all natural laws, can only be properly understood in the light of the higher laws of the human or supernatural order, in which man can utilise natural laws to give stability and confirmation to works which he has produced in apparent contravention of them. In like manner, the law of retribution, which governs our lives, must be interpreted by some other facts of the spiritual order to which we belong. For, while the sinner does suffer for his sin, it is manifest that he is not the only—or even the greatest—sufferer. It frequently happens that those

¹ Mark x. 45.

² Ezekiel xviii. 20.

who have never been tempted to commit some special form of sin, and who have suffered no personal damage from its commission, are the most grievously affected by it. The very thought of such a sin may wound a pure and sensitive nature more keenly than any remorse which its perpetrator may experience, and any suffering which its immediate victim may endure. It is such suffering, wholly undeserved, that interprets, and is interpreted by, the sufferings of Christ. The fact is most patent that, notwithstanding His perfect sinlessness, He was involved in an anguish for sin which has amazed every generation. No darkness that ever gathered round a sinner could be more profound than that which deepened down upon the well-beloved Son of God. No voice out of the misery of retributive punishment ever expressed desolation so utter as that which cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me." If the law of retribution is the only law which reveals the justice of God, an insurmountable difficulty confronts us in the passion of Christ because of sin. The theory that He suffered to set us an example of patient endurance, does not solve the difficulty. Indeed it throws as dark a blot upon the justice of God as the theory which it would condemn ; for why should perfect innocence be afflicted just to teach or help the guilty to bear patiently the penalty of their guilt ? Whatever theories we weave or tear asunder, the fact remains that Christ did suffer more severely because of sin than sinners ever endured in it. And when we duly consider this fact, and think of the blessings that

have accrued to humanity from these sufferings, His own teaching concerning their sacrificial significance will be found to be more reasonable than any of the theories which have been devised to explain that teaching away.¹

The testimony of Christ concerning His mission of redemption by the sacrifice of Himself, not only harmonises with the teaching of Holy Scripture, but also satisfies a universal and profound human want. The doctrine of His vicarious sacrifice need not be accepted as true just because it is found in the Bible. It is revealed in the Bible because it is true, and because it corresponds with the older revelation given in the nature which is common to all men. Though the leaves of that older revelation are soiled and defaced, they have not been destroyed; and their contents have been sufficiently deciphered to convince us that they were originally written by the finger of God. It is the accord of Christ's revelation with universal human necessity and aspiration that stamps its divinity. For the real meaning of His vicarious sacrifice we must search deeper than in the testimonies of the doctors and fathers and even the Apostles of the Church. We shall only discover it in the actual condition of man as related to the essential nature of God. It is because

¹ The death of Christ has been described "as the greatest moral act which the world has ever seen" (Jowett, "Essay on Satisfaction and Atonement," *Epistles of St. Paul*, ii. p. 550). So, indeed, it was, but some who have ab-

jured the doctrine of its atoning efficacy, have continued to adore it as the highest example ever given of self-immolating love. If, however, the idea of the vicarious sacrifice be rejected, the death becomes an act without any moral

the sacrifice of Christ discloses in the being or character of God, facts that are indispensable to the purifying and pacifying of the human conscience, that He proves Himself to be the Saviour of the world and the only Redeemer of man.¹

Therefore, unto the manifestation of this Redeemer in time, "the unspeakable throes of humanity had been tending from the first"; and so we may expect to find, as we look back in the light of the event, indications of a long course of preparation for it. All the dispensations of God, in a universe governed by law, submit to and follow a providentially ordered course, so that nothing happens by accident. God's revelation of Himself, and of His redemptive purpose for man, has its history, which, like that of all things, matures and ripens in time. The words "evolution" in science, "foreordination" in theology, probably suggest after all the same fact, viz., that every event implies a series of previous events, without which it could not have occurred. The manifestation of Christ was in accord with this general law. Miraculous, in the sense that it was unexpected, and inexplicable by experience, it was no violent interruption of providence. It was the fulfilment of a divine purpose at a period when a long course of preparation for it was completed. What

significance. Self-immolation is not valuable—not even beautiful—except when it promotes some high moral and spiritual end not otherwise to be attained. "Under any other aspect it is as perverse

and futile as it is when shown in the self-torture and suicide of an Indian fakir."—*Colloquia Crucis*, p. 71.

¹ Trench, *Hulsean Lectures*, p. 157.

occurred in nature antecedently to the creation of man, suggests a possible analogy. The sciences of comparative anatomy and physiology have instructed us that the human body is the pattern form of the vertebrate division of animal existence, which nature, through fish and reptile and bird, strives upward to reach. So geology has disclosed in the records of the rocks some very ancient prophecies of man. The animal productions of nature from the first exhibit typical references to one who is

“The king
Of nature, in his person summing all
Her attributes, as she throughout her vast
Extension symbols his humanity.”¹

As the great prophecies of nature are all fulfilled in man, so we may confidently assert that Christ is the divine archetype towards whose manifestation Providence in all previous dispensations was leading. The lines along which Providence was proceeding, and the successive stages in that leading, we may be even less able to trace, than we can trace the stages in the long process during which “a transmitted organism was progressively modified, till the Creator, by some law, perhaps undiscoverable, united with it, under certain conditions, an immaterial soul.” But we may be confident that in both spheres—the spiritual or supernatural, and the physical or natural—the continuity of the fulfilment of the Divine purpose was unbroken. The indications, though only very partially detected by our imperfect

¹ F. Tennyson, *Daphne and other Poems*, p. 301.

observation, are now sufficiently suggestive since the reality to whom they pointed has been disclosed, that Christ was indeed sent forth "in the fulness of time."¹

This is plainly declared in Scripture, though we have been accustomed till recently to limit its application to the religious history of one people. In the wider horizons to which our vision has been providentially directed, we have learned that the Scripture expressions "the ends of the world,"² the "dispensation of the fulness of time,"³ have a universal reference; and that Christ, instead of being only the Redeemer of the Jewish people, or of the Christian Church, is the Mediator of the whole scheme of the grace of God for all mankind. Humanity is neither "a congeries of nations from which God selects one to be the recipient of His favour, nor an agglomeration of individual atoms capable of isolating themselves from the rest, and of standing alone."⁴ Humanity is an organic unity, whose lowest member is essential to the well-being of the highest. What is done in a part is done for the whole; what is revealed *to* the Jew is revealed *for* the Gentile. In the dispensation of redemption the unit is the human race; and though in that dispensation the divine methods are mysterious, the divine purpose has been clearly announced, and that is the "gathering together in one of all things in Christ, both which are

¹ Green, *Prologomena to Ethics*, p. 87; Miller, *Footprints of the Creator*, p. 291; Fairbairn, *Typology*, vol. i. p. 380.

² 1 Corinthians x. 11.

³ Ephesians i. 10.

⁴ Bersier, *The Oneness of the Race in its Fall and its Future*. London, 1871, p. 48.

in heaven, and which are on earth," the reconciliation unto Himself "of those who were sometime alienated and enemies in their mind by wicked works in the body of His flesh through death, to present them holy and unblameable and unreprouable in His sight."¹ This was the mystery so hidden from the ages that the most inspired prophet did not comprehend what he was moved by the Holy Ghost to utter concerning it. But we, who read the prophecies and providences of ancient times in the light of the Gospel, are now able to discover predictions and types of it in other religions than the Jewish one. We can see how Jesus, when declaring to those who wished to make Him their king, that He had come to be their sacrifice, and to give them life through His death, was "not without venerable witness in the conscience and traditions of mankind."² We may be able to trace only a few faint indications of this witnessing, but we may confidently affirm the reality of it. As Judaism, not so much in respect of its success, as of its failure to meet the *spiritual* wants of mankind, was a prophecy of Christ, so heathenism at its best, in respect of its inadequacy to satisfy men's *moral* necessities, was a prophecy of Judaism. It is, then, the peculiar glory of Christ that He is related, not simply to Judaism, but to every religion by which man has endeavoured to express his highest hopes and soothe his greatest fears. He is the reality towards whom they all tend, in whom

¹ Colossians i. 20 ; Ephesians ii. 16.

² Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, *Nineteenth Century*, 1891, p. 671.

they are all fulfilled, and of whom, therefore, not only in their "guesses at truth," but in their aberrations from it, which have made philosophy abhor the name of religion, they all unconsciously testify.

The subject selected for exposition in this lecture is the prophetic significance of religious rites which may be said to have prevailed in every discovered or discoverable form of religion. Wherever man has been found, and as far back as he can be traced by his relics or language, sacrifice under various forms is a prominent feature of his religion. It is true that the word "sacrifice" is not a primitive word, being without equivalent or correspondent in the common dictionary of the Aryan nations.¹ It has also a more limited application now than in very ancient times, for then it covered any religious act, such as the ceremonial observed in lighting or mending the fire on the domestic hearth. Even old Latin writers often understood by it not an offering, but the whole ceremonial or *ἱερουργία* of religion.² The habitual usage of the word, however, has for a very long time corresponded to its etymology, as signifying oblations presented in a sacred place, or upon or before an altar, which involved the slaughter of a victim and the consequent loss of it to the offerer.³ As thus defined,

¹ Müller, *Physical Religion*, p. 106.

² Plautus, *Amphit.*, act iii. sc. 3, makes *rem divinam facere* and *sacrificare* the same; also *Religion of Socrates*, p. 197.

³ "Sacrificium est victima, et

quæcunque in ara cremantur (Lactant., lib. vi. cap. ult., quoted by Sykes, *Essay on Sacrifice*, p. 7). In Hebrew the word *korban* is the generic name including not only oblations at the altar, but sacred gifts of all kinds such

sacrifice from time immemorial has prevailed all over the world, in all forms of religion natural to man. It cannot be associated with only savage notions of life and duty, nor can it be regarded as marking a barbarous stage which as man advances religion will leave behind. As matter of fact no religion with the exception of our own has outgrown or discarded it. The founder of Buddhism vainly endeavoured to wean men from the practice of it in the East, and nowhere in the West did philosophy succeed in dispossessing the heart of belief in its efficacy. In Christianity alone sacrificial slaughter never found a place, and yet sacrifice is still the central thought in the Christian theory of religion, and the leading principle in Christian practice. Everywhere else, save among sections of non-Christian peoples, who rejecting the formal dogmas of our religion, have yet been greatly influenced by its spirit, the most cultured as well as the rudest of nations have believed in and practised sacrifice as an acceptable and profitable service.¹

The universal prevalence of sacrifice, the ineradicable belief in its efficacy even when contradicted by the higher reasonings of men,² surely indicates some

as the materials composing the structure of the tabernacle. Not every gift was a sacrifice, but only such as were offered immediately to God and consumed in whole or in part in the manner appointed."—Outram, *De Sacrificiis*, p. 82.

¹ Kennicott, *Two Dissertations*, p. 161; Maurice, *Sacrifice*, pp. 45, 61.

² Sane tantum aberat—unde ritus tam tristis, et a natura deorum alienus in hominum corda veniret, se tam longe propagaret et eorum moribus tam tenaciter adhæreret."—Spencer, *De Leg. Heb.*, lib. iii. Diss. ii. c. 4; also Porphyry quoted by Eusebius, *Præp. Evang.*, lib. iv. c. 10.

demand of nature. A disposition which the most cultured heathen nations were not able to outlive may be described, like man's belief in Deity and in his own soul, as indigenous to his nature. Beliefs which are instinctive are properly regarded as pointing to some reality which can satisfy them. Like our physical organs they imply a correlate of some kind. The eye implies an element of light, and in like manner man's instinctive belief in Deity, though by no means to be assumed as a demonstration of the existence of Deity, is a ground of probability so strong that it would be foolish and dangerous to disregard it as a motive or director of conduct. The same reasoning applies to the universal belief in the efficacy of sacrifice. Though all man's sacrificial acts have failed to ease his conscience, yea, just because they have failed, the presumption that there must be some Divine reality to satisfy the universal craving is a strong one. No constitutional instinct ever yet betrayed; nature never made a mistake. "The structure of man," says Emerson, "is not an organised lie, nor is any false expectation raised in a universe whose Creator keeps His word with the very least of His creatures." So when we discover that wherever the sacrifice of Christ is properly presented, material sacrifice ceases in the worship of God, and the disposition to offer it is regenerated and transformed into the surrender of ourselves to Christ in thankoffering for our salvation, we have surely not presumptive but conclusive evidence that the spiritual necessities of man expressed by his sacrifices have been divinely provided for.

It is in this sense we maintain that there is in sacrifice a typical element, more prophetic and reliable, than some theologians formerly professed to find in the personages and institutions and events described in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament there are many true types of the divine original revealed in the New; but it is now generally admitted that some of the analogies formerly adduced were trifling and far-fetched. We have learned to reject them therefore, as "frivolous conceits by which well-meaning apologists brought ridicule on the themes which they endeavoured to vindicate." We are now seeking for the real types, those which were divinely pre-ordained to be prophetic of Christ, in the actions and beliefs which express the instincts of man as a creature essentially moral and religious. It is allowed by the most trustworthy typologists that the true type and antitype must alike be constituent parts of the same general scheme of Divine Providence.¹ And surely there can be no truer or clearer types of the redemption which God is accomplishing, than those original necessities of human nature which are satisfied and those instinctive beliefs which are regenerated and fulfilled by the revelation of the Divine sacrifice in Christ.

If it be granted or assumed that the disposition to sacrifice is instinctive in humanity, we need not discuss a question formerly keenly debated as to whether sacrifice was a human invention or a Divine institution.² The proposition was often very improperly

¹ Fairbairn, *Typology*, vol. i. p. 60.

² See for comparison of the various views Outram, *De Sacri-*

stated: for if by a Divine institution was meant an ordinance enjoined by formal command, the question resolved itself "into a historical problem never likely to obtain a solution."¹ The Bible itself affords no help towards settling the difficulty when so presented; but the Bible does enlighten and direct us to the true conclusion when the question is rightly formulated. For we are instructed by the Bible, that whatever is really human is originally Divine, and so if the universality of sacrifice indicates a human necessity or disposition, sacrifice must be regarded as a Divine institution. But not because it was inaugurated by any Divine external command. Man required no such command to begin to sacrifice; the disposition to do so was always within him and would be evoked by the conditions under which he lived and by the events which befel him. He was indeed instructed by a primeval revelation, for although it was not communicated in audible voices or by visible signs, it was legibly inscribed upon the constitution of his being. In this respect sacrifice is akin to other Divine institutions essential to the education of man. The family, social and civil government, indispensable to man's well-being as defending him from the degradation of the brutes and providing for his proper development, are Divine institutions. Yet in the Bible their origin is never ascribed to any positive Divine

ficiis, book i. c. 1; Warburton,
Divine Legation of Moses, book ix.
 c. 2; Deyling, *Observat. Sacrae*,
 ii. p. 53 *seq.*

¹ Herzog, *Encycl.*, ii. p. 1684;
 Smith, *Dictionary of the Bible*,
 iii. p. 1077.

command; they are regarded as matters of course, the inevitable outcome of man's moral and spiritual instincts. So, like sacrifice, they are represented as being coeval with man, and for this very reason, as being made the subject of much subsequent legislation, in order to discipline them to secure the end which they were originally designed to subserve.¹

And therefore we need not enter minutely into the discussion of another question as to the rationale of sacrifice, seeing that it is really involved in the question as to its origin. We could hope to obtain only an indirect and very partial answer to any inquiry as to what were the feelings, and views, and aims of primitive worshippers in presenting their sacrifices. Of the several competing theories concerning this subject which were formerly in vogue, not one, taken by itself, nor indeed all taken together, though formulated and supported by men of vast learning and great intellectual ability, will account for the whole phenomena. They each explain some of the data in certain stages of religious culture; and so, though distinct from each other, they need not, as covering only a part of the field, be regarded as antagonistic. A more comprehensive survey of the actual state of matters may include them all. The *Gift theory* propounded by Spencer,² and supported by many eminent scholars both on the Continent and in Great Britain, holds good in regard to some aspects of

¹ Maurice, *Sacrifice*, p. 4; Oehler, *Old Test. Theol.*, vol. i. p. 391.

² *De Legibus Hebræorum Ritualibus et earum Rationibus*. Posthumous edition. Cambridge, 1726.

sacrifice. In certain phases of religion men have extensively sought to obtain and to keep the friendship of Deity by oblations from the produce of their fields or by offerings made by sacrificial slaughter from their flocks and herds. It is founded, however, upon a sense of the value of property, and of the worth and efficacy of the gift of a part of it, which, as far as can be gathered from the records of mankind, cannot be regarded as primitive. The conception is rather one which implies a change from an earlier organisation of society, and therefore it is not likely that men began to sacrifice from such a motive or for such an object. The *Federal theory*, advanced and supported with much ingenuity and learning by Mede and Sykes, founding sacrifice upon the intention to enter into, maintain, or restore covenant relations with Deity, is in the same sense, and to a similar extent a sound one.¹ From the widely prevailing custom of contracting leagues between nations by sacrificial feasts, from the use of the Greek word *σπονδῇ*, signifying a treaty between parties ratified by libation; from the Roman mode of celebrating marriage (*confarreatio*), in which the eating of selected fruits and salted meal was regarded as rendering the bond indissoluble, and from the very general practice of sharing banquets with the dead, we may safely conclude that in the later ages of Gentile nations sacrifice was practised as a solemn rite of federation and communion with the gods. But while this

¹ Sykes, *Essay on the Nature, Design, and Origin of Sacrifice*. London, 1748.

was so, and while the theory illustrates some features even of Jewish sacrifice, we must not infer that sacrifice was originally and universally so employed. The theory does not account for one very prominent class of sacrifices, the "holocaust" of which the sacrificer never partook, and it ignores or vainly endeavours to explain away the whole of that important group of sacrifices in which we are chiefly concerned, viz. the piacular or expiatory.¹ Warburton, in the *Divine Legation of Moses*,² has endeavoured with more success to account for sacrifice as a natural device to aid or supplement the defects of language by symbolic action. His theory has been adopted by many others,³ who think it unnecessary to make any account of the imperfections of language. Regarding "representation by action as gratifying to men who have the gift of eloquence, and as singularly suited to great purposes," they consider that "adoration invested in some striking and significative forms, and conveyed by the instrumentality of material tokens, would be most in accordance with the strong energies of religious feeling." This applies of course to other acts of worship than that of adoration, for whether the motive would be to express gratitude, or penitence, or to supplicate a boon, or to deprecate anger, the intention of the worshipper would naturally be indicated not only by

¹ Fairbairn, *Typology*, vol. i. p. 252 seq.

² Book iv. sec. 4, and book ix. ch. 2.

³ Davison, *Inquiry into the Origin and Intent of Sacrifice*, p. 19; Bähr, *Symbolek*, book ii.; Thuluc, Appendix to *Commentary on Hebrews*.

speech, but in symbolic action more expressive than speech.¹

This theory, conceived on the same principle as the two already alluded to, is but another aspect of the same rationalistic view that sacrifice can be accounted for on purely human or natural grounds.² It need not be regarded with hostility, or even with suspicion, provided we understand that sacrifice is a natural expression of a spiritual or supernatural necessity. Man is distinguished from the world of nature by his religious instinct, that is by his consciousness of not only lateral relations to his fellow-men, his equals, but upward relations to powers and beings superior to himself, and in the higher stages of his religion, to one supreme Being, the Author and Governor of his own existence. The feelings and thoughts originating in this Divine relationship cannot all be expressed by speech or even by action. Man's deepest feelings and highest thoughts are unutterable in words and inexpressible by deeds. Naturally, therefore, and of necessity, he endeavours by actions to supplement his spoken worship, and he makes his approach to Deity with some material offering or symbolic action. Even regarded from the high spiritual standpoint from which we, as heirs of so many centuries of Christian culture, are wont to contemplate things, this cannot appear

¹ Cave, *Scripture Doctrine of Sacrifice*, pp. 31, 41 seq.

² "Nature dictates this symbol to all her children; it being nothing else than a species of worship

in action instead of words, so that sacrifice and religious worship were correlative and coeval ideas."—*Divine Legation*, book ix. ch. ii.

strange to us. We still present our offerings in the worship of God, and we have high authority for believing that, with the sacrifices "of doing good and communicating," God, "who is not in need of anything," "is well pleased."¹ When we recall the conceptions and sentiments which in our childhood we entertained of our relations to Deity, we find nothing very far out of the way in the feeling which constrained men in primitive ages to express in more material forms their worship of Deity. In childhood and youth the mind contemplates the Divine as inseparable from the natural, and regards the spiritual as one with the material and corporeal. And so in primitive religion, yea in all stages of religion, until under the discipline of the Divine Spirit it matured into the religion of Christ, sacrifice has had a place as prominent as that occupied by prayer and praise, with which for very long it has been closely connected. The Bible seems to indicate² that in point of time sacrifice preceded these more spiritual modes of worship, and this is what we might expect in the Divine education of man. "For that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterwards that which is spiritual."³ But that which is spiritual cannot be regarded in this instance as antagonistic to what was natural. It was already contained and enveloped in the natural, and both, though never identified, have been so closely correlated as to be regarded as inseparable. Sacrifice in the old religion, like the

¹ Heb. ch. xiii. 16; Acts xvii.
25.

² Genesis iv. 26.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 46.

sacraments in the new, were ordinances, or rather actions, as essential to worship as prayer and praise. They were not arbitrary or artificial methods of expressing religious emotion for which some other invention might be substituted ; they sprang from the very fountain of religion and were intimately connected with its essence. Religion in the case of man must be symbolic ; the form may be changed according to his stage of experience, but he cannot outgrow the necessity for it. The feeling in which sacrifice originated, and of which in ancient times it was the symbol, is still the very life and spirit of our religion, the reality in which all that is true in other religions is fulfilled.¹

All these theories as to the origin and rationale of sacrifice are founded upon the idea that the chief, or only constituent of religion is the sense of dependence and inferiority which obliges man to acknowledge and worship deity. Fear undoubtedly, in the higher form of reverence, and in its lower, as dread of powers invisible and dangerous, is one of the principal elements into which religion may be resolved. But there is another constituent of religion as essential to it as is

¹ Sacrifice is not to be regarded as just an "embodied prayer," but something different from prayer though conjoined with it. "Instead of corresponding to prayer as symbol to idea, sacrifice ran parallel to and accompanied it."—Compare Bähr, *Symbolek*, book ii. 272 ; Oehler, *Old Test.*

Theol., vol. i. p. 396 ; Outram, *De Sacrificiis*, book i. p. 238 ; Cave, *Scrip. Doctrine of Sacrifice*, p. 51 ; Hengstenberg, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, p. 373 ; Kurtz, *Sacrificial Worship of the Old Testament*, p. 58 ; Delitzsch, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, vol. ii. p. 392.

the sense of dependence, which has not been sufficiently taken into consideration, and that is the sense of affinity subsisting between man and the being or beings that he worships. Invisible though these be they are never regarded as wholly unknown. Though in many respects strange they are not conceived of as alien, but as akin to their worshippers. In most of the lower forms of religion this belief is very clearly expressed. The relation of the god to the tribe, or to the community, is regarded as one not of concord only but of kith. He is supposed to be interested in all that concerns their fortunes, as actually one of themselves. He is believed to be their common head, in a very literal sense. Renan's assertion that "dread is the sole root of religion," is thus contradicted by the beliefs of even the most degraded peoples. To them in very many instances the god instead of being a terror is a familiar and friendly power, living not only close to, but among them. It is only in certain stages of religion that the gods are conceived of as far removed from men, and as requiring to be conciliated on account of their power to promote or to mar their happiness.

This feeling of affinity, expressed in the quotation from Aratus by St. Paul on Mars Hill,¹ meets us in the very earliest account given in Genesis of the origin of man. In the words, "let us make man in our image, after our likeness," we have the most sublime conception of human dignity and destiny that has ever been formulated. According to the author of Genesis

¹ Acts xvii. 28.

man is not animated flesh acting automatically like the animals; he is living soul inspired by his Creator and capable of being trained into His likeness. There is in his constitution a Divine element, in virtue of which he is subject to God as the Father of his spirit. This conception of fatherhood, however, is separate from that of Aratus as the heavens are separate from the earth. The Gentile thought was derived from the belief that God exists in the likeness of men. "He is the superlative of man, who is the positive."¹ By the author of Genesis this would have been condemned as blasphemy. God was not to be conceived of by him in the likeness of any one; and if man be God's child, it is not by natural descent as *born*, but by creation as *made* in His image. Sonship is a relation not of nature but of grace. The Hebrew prophets while proclaiming Jehovah as the Father of Israel carefully guarded against all possible misconception of the relationship. The surrounding heathen might say to their idol stock, "thou art my father, to a stone, thou hast brought me forth,"² but Israel revered Jehovah not as a Father who had begot them, but as the "Most High who had created them,"³ a nation over all other nations, by His Divine intervention. Jehovah is God, and Israel are men the work of His hands.⁴ They are His creatures, yet as spiritually related to Him they are capable of knowing, communicating with, and receiving revela-

¹ Baring Gould, *Origin and Development of Religious Belief*, i. 149.

² Jeremiah ii. 27.

³ Isaiah xliii. 1.

⁴ Prof. Robertson Smith, *Religion of Semites*, pp. 42, 43.

tions from Him. That is the fundamental dogma of Scripture, that God has made man in affinity with Himself—a kindred being, not only capable of conversing with God, but actually enjoying and profiting by the privilege. We cannot conceive a moment in human history when God was shut off from communicating with man, or when man was excluded from converse with God.¹

Religion on its Divine side thus implies revelation ; revelation implies personal concern of the Infinite for the finite, paternal relationship and affection and care.² On its human side religion, as rooted in man's sense of affinity with the Author of his being, upon whom he is dependent, represents man's aspiration and endeavour

¹ It is a significant fact that this sense of affinity with duty is thus found not only in the higher philosophic religion of Greece, but in the very lowest forms of religion. Although most grotesquely and hideously expressed, it proves that man can never lose the conviction stamped originally upon his nature that he is not essentially evil. Then when the Gospels are interpreted in the light of the early chapters of Genesis the Incarnation is found to be not the makeshift which theology has sometimes propounded it to be—a Divine expedient to bring the Holy God into contact with a race that had sinned. The Incarnation is grounded upon the perfect fitness of man as made in God's image to be the utterer of

God's life. The theory of the Scotists commends itself thus as worthy of more consideration than it has received. Founding their theology upon God, not upon man, beginning not from our sinful selves and so "measuring God's straight line by our crooked one," but accepting the teaching of Scripture that all good proceeds from God who is ever revealing Himself to man, they maintain that the Incarnation was no afterthought conceived to meet the necessities of a sinful race. By reason of human sin the method of it may have been modified, but "etiam si non peccasset homo, deus tam esset incarnatus."—West., *Christ. Consum.* p. 104; Maurice, *Sacr. introd.* p. xli.

² Hitchcock's *Sermons*, p. 83.

to improve his relationship into that close and perpetual fellowship with God for which he was created. Yielding to his inward necessities, man naturally and spontaneously will express in his worship his craving for this communion with God. The homage which he renders could have no value apart from its spontaneity. Man is not compelled to worship God on account of the rudeness or wickedness of his nature, but in virtue of his inalienable affinity he finds it impossible to abstain from seeking through worship that fellowship which is the Divine ideal of his destiny. So, though in Scripture sacrifice is found linked to the first step in the degradation of the race, in the general sense of offering it can be conceived of as having a far earlier date in human history than the fact of sin, with which it has had so intimate a connection. Had sin never entered the world, human history would have been one of perpetual ascent toward the supreme holiness by an ever-increasing experience of the Divine life maintained by continuous self-surrender to the Divine will. Giving himself to God untainted by disobedience, involved the offering of all he had and did. So his "life of fearless intercourse would have been a continual oblation saintly."¹

But nowhere in the world, and at no period of human history, and by no member of the race, has the life of fearless intercourse and perfect communion with God been realised. Everywhere and

¹ Cave, *Scripture Doctrine of Sacrifice*, p. 133; Dale, *The Atonement*, p. 421; Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, book xx. chap. 25; Oehler, *Old Testament Theology*, i. p. 396.

always we are confronted by the confession that fellowship with God has been broken by human sin. In one form or another this confession is expressed in all the religions of mankind; and it is stamped plainly upon all the categories under which the different varieties of sacrifice have been classified. Theoretically we may divide them into honorific and piacular, and subdivide them under various heads, but practically they all spring from the consciousness that union between man and Deity has been interrupted, and that before fellowship can be maintained, it must be reknit and restored. So in the history of religion the piacular sacrifices have been of peculiar and prime importance. To them the word sacrifice, answering in its ordinary metaphorical use to the reluctant surrender of an object of value, chiefly applies, and all of them involve the surrender of a life, or of its substitute. All such sacrifices, therefore, clearly indicate how deeply imprinted upon the human conscience is the conviction that man is not what he ought to be, that he is in a state of alienation from God; and yet, at the same time, they testify to man's earnest desire and endeavour to effect at any cost reconciliation with Him. So instead of regarding sacrifice, and especially piacular sacrifice, as Renan describes it, "as the oldest and most serious error, the one most difficult to eradicate among those bequeathed to us by the state of folly through which humanity passed in its infancy,"¹ we are forced to consider it as an apt and fitting confession of the existence in humanity of

¹ *History of the People of Israel*, i. p. 43.

a foreign element—sin, which, however introduced, has immensely weakened the whole life of the race, and impeded its advance in good ; and also as an earnest appeal and effort, justified by the facts and the results as wisely directed, that this primeval curse should be eliminated and destroyed.¹

We propose to consider some of the most salient or characteristic of the sacrificial rites of mankind, with the view of discovering the beliefs which inspired or suggested them. Our survey will not be confined to the very wide field of the religions which reflect a high degree of civilisation, and which are testified to by great literatures and monuments. It will extend to what of the wastes of humanity have been discovered

¹ The remarkable positions taken up by Dr. Priestley (*Theological Repository*, i. pp. 401 seq., 214) that no nation, Jewish or Christian, ancient or modern, appears to have had the least knowledge, or betrayed the least sense of their want of any expedient of satisfaction for sin besides repentance and a good life, and that all ancient and modern religions appear to be utterly destitute of anything like a doctrine of proper atonement, has only to be stated to disclose its absurdity. We can hardly conceive it possible for him to have made so bold an assertion had he enjoyed the advantage we possess of reading the sacred books of India, China, Persia, Assyria, and Egypt ; and

yet he was well acquainted with Greek and Roman literature, the phraseology of which is steeped in ideas of propitiatory atonement. Then the whole Jewish system, as contained in the Old Testament and expounded by the rabbin, is based upon belief in atonement. Of course the opinions of the rabbin may be absurd, and the whole Jewish system may be based on error, but there can be no question as to the facts. The very authorities which he quotes in support of his theories are found, when examined, to be in direct contradiction to them. See Magee, *Essays and Dissertations on the Atonement*, vol. i. 124 seq., and 254 seq. ; Outram, *De Sacrificiis*, p. 261 seq.

by patient modern research, in which are found only coarse superstitions and repulsive customs, the outcome of ideas as to the constitution of the natural and spiritual world, which may strike us as most irrational and absurd. We dare not, however, on that account pass them by. No believer in the great Scripture truth of the organic unity of the human race ought to consider any form of religion too low for his interest, or even for his respect. The religious rites of the most degraded peoples are deserving of study. To despise or ignore the very lowest of them would be as unbecoming in a theologian, "as it would be for a physiologist to vaunt his ignorance of the lower forms of life."¹ It is not as matter of curious research into what is so far beneath our present level of faith that we ought to pursue our investigation into the crudities of savage beliefs. We may find it an important practical guide to the study of our religion, and a help by no means to be despised in determining what of our creed is to be considered essential, and what non-essential to the faith. The observation is already trite, that we shall never properly appreciate our religion if we do not study the other religions that have preceded, or that may still profess to compete with it. Certainly we shall never rightly understand the sacrifices of Israel described in the Bible if we are ignorant of the sacrificial customs that prevailed among the surrounding heathen. It is only thus that we can realise the true significance of the election of the seed of Abraham as a people divinely

¹ Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, i. pp. 20, 280.

separated from all nations, and specially educated to become the religious teachers of all mankind.¹

Further, even savage sacrifices, regarded in the light of the Divine purpose revealed in Scripture and now being fulfilled through the religion of Christ, may be found to exhibit some of the really typical elements of which we are in search. The partial can only be rightly understood in the completed whole, and in the higher is always found the true interpretation of the lower. The intelligent man understands the prayer which the child unconsciously prattles. The Jewish people, though children compared with ourselves, could enunciate clearly truths of religion which enlightened Gentiles could only babble. "After last comes first," and "we find the key to the beginning in the end, not the key to the end in the beginning." We who live in the fuller light of the Gospel, understand the religions both of the Jews and the Gentiles better than they did themselves. In sacrificing, the worshippers were unable to account distinctly for what they were doing; different reasons for the same sacrifice would be given by different sacrificers, while of the majority it may be truly said that, just as men pray long before they begin to theorise about prayer, so they sacrificed because they felt they must. What gave meaning to their actions lay more or less obscurely in the background of their minds; but we, contemplating them from a higher level, understand the drift at least of many things which they did in ignorance. Without reading into their beliefs our

¹ Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, Introd. p. vi.

own convictions, we apprehend somewhat of the truth after which, in less favourable conditions, they could only grope. Then again, we must not forget that the revelation contained in Scripture presupposes and attaches itself to a primitive and fundamental revelation which from the beginning of the creation God had given in His works and in man's moral nature.¹ That earlier revelation man, however advanced, has not outgrown, and from it, however degraded, he can never wholly fall away. So, at the foundation of the sanguinary and revolting worship of even savage men, there may be found some fragments of Divine ideas, crude and hideously distorted, which testify of instincts which man can neither wholly lose nor destroy, and which the Creator of man will never disregard. If in his idolatry he was unconsciously seeking after the invisible God, then in his sacrifices he was unintentionally feeling after the Cross of Christ.

The analogies which heathen religions present to Christianity are very striking, and the more these religions are studied the more numerous are found to be the parallels in legend and doctrine and precept subsisting between them. From the earliest days of the Church it has been a favourite part of the tactics of its assailants to endeavour by the production of these parallels to rob the Gospel of its significance as a Divine revelation, seeing so many of its truths had already been discovered by the unassisted efforts of the human mind. We are coming to understand these things better than we did; we have a clearer and more correct perception of the

¹ Romans i. 20 ; Colossians i. 26, ii. 2.

significance of revelation and inspiration, and we can utilise in defence and confirmation of the faith the very facts which suggested the charges at the first and gave them currency.¹ If the Gospel be truly revelation, we may and ought to find not only types and prophecies of it in the antecedent Jewish economy, but parallels and analogies which are really anticipations and testimonies of it, in every form of religion. From most unexpected quarters witness may be borne to us of the things most firmly believed among us. We may listen to "voices of the prophets"² other than Hebrew, in heathen sayings that were dark and incomprehensible, in parables that were perplexing and enigmatic to those who first spake and to those who first heard them. "Because not unto themselves but unto us they did minister the things that are now declared to us, by those who have preached the Gospel with the Holy Spirit sent from Heaven."³

We shall, however, make a great mistake if we seek among heathen sacrifices for only resemblances to those described in the Bible, and for indications of beliefs analogous to those which we hold ourselves. In the contrasts and contradictions presented by these sacrifices, we are more likely to discover the clue which will direct us to the universal element in religion of which we are in search.⁴ It is not that which is common to paganism and Judaism which is most truly catholic, but precisely that in which Christianity differs from both. In the very points in

¹ Trench, *Hulsean Lectures*, p. 151, second edition, 1847.

² Acts xiii. 27.

³ 1 Peter i. 12.

⁴ Caird, *Introduction to Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 82-83.

which the Bible traverses the sacred scriptures of other religions we are likely to find the catholic truth. Applying this principle to the sacrifices of all religions we shall find that while they have much in common, there are certain broadly marked features which distinguish the sacrifices described in the Bible, and these if carefully observed will point us to some very important conclusions.

In every religion sacrifice is assumed to be an essential part of worship, and the rites through which it is offered are subject to minute regulations in order to secure its efficacy; but when we compare these regulations with the legislation contained in the Bible, the fact becomes manifest that in the worship of Israel the sacrificial instinct was put under restraints of which there are few or no traces in the rituals of other religions. Everywhere else the disposition to sacrifice was not only allowed, but encouraged to develop itself with freedom; but in the religion represented by the Bible it was bridled, and was limited to bounds which it could not pass without sacrilege. Excess of what was prescribed was as criminal as was neglect or refusal to provide what was required. All through the whole system there is an apparent intention to correct the extravagances to which the religious instinct is prone, and to discipline and educate it to high moral ends. Warburton has correctly remarked that "Of all customs in use among men, those respecting religion are the most liable to abuse." "Sacrifices designed to be eucharistic or propitiatory are imagined to receive their chief value from their numbers and the costliness of the offerings,

and in all sacrifices of an expiatory import, the predominating passion of fear soon superadds strange enormities to the follies of the worshippers.”¹ This statement finds ample illustration in the sacrifices not only of barbarous peoples, but of peoples equal to, and in some respects more advanced in civilisation than the Israelites. In India, China, and Egypt religion comprehended an enormous body of sacrifices with a ritual so comprehensive and minute as to take possession of the whole life of the individual. In the religions of Greece and Rome, hecatombs appear to have been the rule whenever circumstances rendered them possible, or when ambition or self-interest or fear seemed to demand them. Now it is true that upon exceptional occasions, such as the bringing of the ark to Jerusalem,² the enthronement of Solomon,³ and the consecration of the Temple,⁴ we do read in the Bible of enormous sacrificial slaughter. We must not forget, however, that on all such occasions the victims represented the materials of a great national feast, and that, in any case, they were not required by the demands of the sacrificial code which has come down to us. The requirements of that code, as we have it in the last of its successive revisions, though extensive and extravagant according to our standard, were moderate when compared with what was demanded in the religions of India and Egypt, or in that of Rome in the times of the Cæsars.⁵

¹ *Works*, ed. 1811, vol. vi. p. 281. ² 2 Samuel vi. 13.

³ 2 Chron. i. 6.

⁴ 1 Kings viii. 63.

⁵ Clarke, *Ten Great Religions*, p. 319; Kalisch, *Com. Lev.*, i. p. 308.

Thus was it that in the religion of the Bible the world was spared the enormity of legalised human sacrifice, and the fact is remarkable seeing that the custom was elsewhere universal. No other nation than Israel that has left any record of itself can escape the reproach of having not only permitted human sacrifice, but as having stamped it with such approval as is implied in regulations framed for its being offered.¹ From the Bible it would appear that it must be laid to the charge of individual Israelites. Thus Jephthah, a half heathen outlaw, in a time of political and religious anarchy, in fulfilment of a rash pledge, on a very exceptional occasion did once what was customary among neighbouring nations.² It is also recorded as one of the dark blots upon the character of David that he took advantage of the heathen demand of the Gibeonites to "hang up before Jehovah for an atonement" the seven sons of Saul. This, however, he did from no religious conviction, but as an expedient for ridding himself of the surviving and dangerous scions of the preceding dynasty whom he was pledged by the most solemn oath to spare and to protect.³ In the calamities consequent upon their apostasy moreover, not only individuals but whole sections of the people appear to have fallen away into the abominable practice.⁴ It is admitted, however, by one most anxious to prove that the Israelites were addicted to it, that "not many

¹ Magee, *Discourses and Dissertations*, i. 96.

² Judges xi. 34-40.

³ 1 Sam. xxiv. 22, 23 ; 2 Sam. xxiv. i. *seq.*

⁴ Ps. cvi. 37-38 ; Is. lvii. 5.

clear cases are mentioned.”¹ And the fact is unquestionable that instead of being authorised, the custom was branded with the Divine reprobation by the plain enactments of the law, while the prophets from first to last proclaimed the Divine abhorrence of it in any form as unnatural and impious, and predicted as its inevitable punishment, the sorest disasters.²

The practice was in direct contradiction to one of the fundamental articles of the faith which separated the Israelites from the surrounding heathen. The heathen conceived of man as an integral part of nature, but according to the Bible idea, man was made in the image of the Creator and Ruler of nature. In heathen sacrifice the victim often represented the god, or was supposed to be in close affinity with him; in Jewish sacrifice the victim represented the worshipper, from whom, although his substitute, it was essentially distinct. In heathendom

¹ Ghillany, *Die Menschenopfer der alten Hebraer*, Nürnberg, 1842, pp. 31, 492, 518.

² Kalisch, *Com. Lev.*, i. p. 381 seq., specially p. 403 seq., and Oehler, *Herzog Real-Encycl.*, xvi. p. 621, effectively dispose of the “toll gewordene Kritik eines Ghillany”; Kurtz, *History of the Old Civ.*, Clarke ed., vol. i. p. 260, as effectively exposes the pretensions of a similar work. Daumer, *Der Feuer- und Moloehdienst der Alten Hebraer*. Voltaire (*Œuvres*, tom. xiii. p. 227, eighth edition, 1756), has charged the Jewish law with sanctioning human sacrifice in Lev. xxvii. 29, and he has main-

tained that Jephthah sacrificed his daughter in fulfilment of that law. Bryant also, in his observations and inquiries into ancient history, has derived the custom from the sacrifice of Abraham. Both conclusions are flatly contradicted by express prohibitions of the law and the denunciations of the prophets. Warburton, *Works*, vol. vi. pp. 357, 362 seq., has very ably settled the matter with Voltaire, “whose ignorance of the law of Moses might well have been excused had he forborne to abuse what he did not understand, but to know his Virgil no better was indeed a disgrace.”

the god is simply a deification of some power or phase of nature of which he is only an emanation. Instead of ruling nature he is involved in it and subject to its destiny. In heathen sacrifice the victim was offered with the intention of controlling what in the system of nature the sacrificer desired to bend to his will. Now all such conceptions were most rigidly excluded from the monotheistic creed represented by the "law and the prophets." In it everything was avoided which could refer even remotely to the deification of nature. In whatever stage we regard it, whatever be the dimness resting upon the idea of God, the worshipper whether he be Abraham or Moses or the last Isaiah is ruled by the thought that he has to do in his worship with the Creator and Governor of nature whose will cannot be forced. And it is the exclusion of such heathen conceptions from the creed of Israel, and the presence in it of these essentially higher ideas of the nature of Deity and of man which explain the entire absence from the worship of Israel of the slaughter of human life. What among the heathen was the highest form of piety, a service most acceptable and efficacious, was in Israel a detestable and horrid sacrilege to be visited by the extremest penalty.

In the same way we can account for the prohibition in the worship of Israel of such sacrifices as were represented by the prostitution of women,¹ the mutilation of the persons of the priests,² and other customs not only permitted but actually demanded in many

¹ Herod., i. 181 *seq.*; Strabo, xi., xiv. 16.

² Creuzer, *Symbol.*, ii. 367 *seq.*

other religions. Revolting as they are to us, they were the natural fruit of beliefs prevalent in physiolatry and polytheism. In that phase of religion man's conception of a god is that of a being or person not immoral, but rather non-moral, like nature from which he emanates. So in mythology, which may be described as the creed of polytheism, the ethical element is not represented at all, and from its worship the moral nature got almost nothing to support it. In the most cultured forms of polytheism, religion was totally dissevered from morality. The wisdom of Greece, represented by the philosophers and poets, was forced to separate ethics from theology, for the religious idea was often seen by them to override the moral sentiment, or almost to expel it from the conduct. Worship demanded, as in the instances just referred to, what morality condemned. In the Bible religion this was simply impossible, for the God of the Bible is not a personification of nature, wayward, and immoral, and capricious. He is just and righteous and true, and what He is His worshippers feel they ought to be. This fundamental idea of Deity therefore can only be expressed in a religion essentially ethical. Worship alike of prayer or sacrifice can only be acceptable and efficacious when prompted by sincere conviction of the unchanging righteousness of God, and offered for the moral and spiritual end of purifying and changing the worshipper into a nearer likeness to God.

So again the sacrifices described in the Bible are distinguished from those of all other religions by an

essentially higher intention and motive. In all other religions sacrifice was conceived of as a purely physical means of averting some evil, or of securing some good. Even when not regarded as a means of controlling natural processes, but as likely to propitiate or deprecate the displeasure of the powers that govern men's lives, sacrifice was based upon the principle of *quid pro quo*. Its chief intention was to secure the interest of the sacrificers by lowering the gods to their own narrowness and selfishness, and when the offering was properly rendered there was an end of the matter. But the Law and the Prophets never allowed worshippers to regard their sacrifice as a method of squaring accounts with Deity. It was an expression of homage and a confession of a responsibility of which no offering, however costly, could relieve them. After their sacrifice the responsibility was felt to be greater, for in the sacrifice they surrendered themselves to the Divine Will. Without this surrender the sacrifice was worthless. In no case could they hope to procure God's favour or avert His anger by any offering or sacrifice, however precious. In no stage of religion as presented in the Bible was sacrifice ever permitted to degenerate into a material substitution. The sacrifice to be acceptable must express the entire submission of the offerer, and the value of the sacrifice depended solely upon his sincerity.

The most solemn of all heathen sacrifices were the piacular or expiatory, but the word expiate signified in heathendom conceptions very different from those

expressed by it in the Bible. It has been truly observed that the heathen knew of no atonement in the Bible sense, and the Bible allowed none in the heathen sense.¹ In heathendom an expiation was intended as a rule to remove or remedy physical evils, or to appease the wrath of the offended deities. The Bible sanctioned only such as would by repentance secure the removal of moral and spiritual evils and bring the suppliant into conformity with the righteous will of God. Almost universally in heathen religions the sense of sin was very slight. Transgression consisted in withholding from the gods what was their due, and what man found it was expedient for their interest to render. It was more a mistake than a fault, for if the gods were not supported they could not be serviceable to man. Among the higher forms of polytheistic religion a piacular sacrifice was conceived as a fine, which once paid made an end of responsibility for transgression. All such ideas are not only foreign to the Bible, they are distinctly contradicted and condemned by it. The Israelites were instructed that it was their sin against the Holy Jehovah which required covering or atonement, and they were never permitted to imagine that the payment of any fine could wipe out a transgression, or that the Divine anger because of it could be appeased by the blood or the fat of thousands of the costliest victims.

¹ Kalisch, *Com. on Levit.*, vol. i. p. 316. Compare his chapter on "The sacrifices of the Hebrews compared with those of other Nations," vol. i. pp. 202-213.

From the descriptions given by classical writers of the Greek and Roman sacrifices,¹ some have inferred that the necessity for a right disposition and for a good intention was as distinctly expressed in their rituals as it was in that of Israel. The hands and the garments of the sacrificers were washed and purified with clean water, while the victim had to be similarly purified along with all the materials required for the solemn function. "No one of impure hands should be within the place where the holy vessels were." When the priest was ready to do his office, all profane people were warned by the public crier to depart (*procul este, profani*; *θύρας βέβηλοι*), and all who remained were enjoined to take care of their words (*favete linguis, εὐφημεῖτε*), then, when only the lustrated were present, the priest laying hold of the altar, made earnest supplication, and he that brought the sacrifice repeated the sacred formula after the priest.

"Dictaque verba
Protulit, ut mos est."

We must beware, however, of interpreting such a ritual by our own ideas and sentiments. As matter of fact the proclamation made at the beginning was intended to guard against the presence of any sinister influence. The words which the people were warned not to utter, were not wicked words, but such as in accordance with the belief of the times might be

¹ Dionys. Halic., lib. vii. ; 219 ; vi. 124 ; Brissonius, *De Lucian, De Sacrificiis* ; Juvenal, *Formulis*, p. 9.
Sat. vi. 390 ; Virgil, *Æn.* iv.

easily construed into an evil omen. To prevent and to drown the hearing of such inopportune utterances, flute-players used to perform during the ceremony. It must be borne in mind that public worship in our Christian sense was unknown even in cultured Greece and Rome. The people who assembled in front of the temple, which, as the shrine or dwelling of the god, they were not permitted to enter, took no share whatever in the service. As a rule their presence at acts of ceremonial worship was quite a matter of indifference; they attended only as spectators, as they did at the games in the circus. Upon great public occasions, the priests, in presence of certain state officials, did everything, and upon any other occasion the sacrifice was offered, and the service was performed by the priest for and on behalf of the offerer, not with him.¹

While thus guarding against too favourable an interpretation of the *rituals* of ancient heathen worship, we must freely admit that in heathen literature ideas concerning sacrifice akin to those expressed in the Old Testament found frequent utterance. It is to be feared that sufficient justice to heathen religions has not always been done by the expounders of Christianity. Some of them have not realised that in order to prove Christianity to be Divine, we do not require to prove all heathenism to be inhuman. There were "ethics before there were Christian ethics"; the innate moral sentiment was sure to assert itself, when educated with

¹ Uhlhorn, *Christian Charity in the Ancient Church*, p. 29.

sufficient strength, in testing both religious beliefs and observances. If the system of sacrifice among the Israelites is to be interpreted by the teachings of their psalmists and prophets, it is but fair that heathen systems should be interpreted by the utterances of their poets and philosophers. A large volume could be filled with precepts and maxims culled from heathen literature testifying that the sacrifices of the immoral are of no value, and that an acceptable sacrifice implies that the sacrificers must be pure in heart and upright in mind. Not only did grave sages like Plato,¹ Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, insist that a right moral disposition in the offerer was essential to a proper sacrifice, but playwrights and satirists like Aristophanes Plautus² and Persius, and comedians on the stage like Menander publicly testified, "How vain it was to attempt to propitiate the gods by sacrifices of bulls and kids, by garments of purple, by images of ivory and emerald, instead of by refraining from adultery, theft, murder, and covetousness."³ Many similar testimonies almost as precise and as fervent as those of Micah and Asaph to the effect that the Deity delights only in righteous works, and regards as His true sacrifice, constant justice, and purity not of the raiment but of the heart,

¹ *E.g.*, *Alcib.*, ii. 13; *Legg.*, iv. 8; ii. 9, 11; *Xen.*, *Memor.*, i. 3; Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, iv. 9; *Epist.*, 95; Lucian, *De Sacrificiis*, *passim*; Porphyry, *De Abstin.*, ii. 37; Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.*, lib. ii.

² Plautus, *Rud.*, Prolog. 22-25;

Ovid, *Trist.*, lib. ii. i. 75, 76; *Fast.* ii. 535; *Epist.*, xx. 181; Horace, *Od.*, lib. ii., xvii. 32.

³ For many other authorities see Farrer, *Paganism and Christianity*, p. 87 *seq.*; Sykes, *Essay on Sacrifice*, p. 51 *seq.*, p. 82 *seq.*, p. 311 *seq.*

reach us from the sacred books of the great religions of the East. The early Christian apologists would have hailed all such as are now available for us with thankfulness. From their writings alone we could obtain the materials for constructing a large Greek or Roman moral anthology.¹ In defending and confirming the faith, they delighted to employ weapons drawn from the armoury of heathen literature. Out of the mouths of Gentile philosophers and poets they exposed the absurdity of all pagan attempts by sacrificial worship to propitiate Deity. In this respect, they were simply following the example of the writers of the Hebrew Bible, for one of them in sublime catholicity represents no Hebrew but the heathen Balaam as protesting "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"²

All this may be thankfully admitted as bearing witness that the essentially moral nature of man can and will survive the oppression of an immoral system of belief or of worship. We must remember, however,

¹ Clem., *Strom.*, 606; August.,
De Civ. Dei, xix. 23; Eusebius,

Præp. Evang., almost *passim*.
² Micah vi. 6, 7, 8.

that these were the sentiments and convictions of the few. The vast majority sacrificed in the belief that the *opus operatum* was efficacious, that all that required attention was the correct performance of the rite and the exact utterance of the formula. Among the Israelites, on the other hand, the common people were instructed by the priests and the Levites that not the offering but the offerer was of most account in the Divine esteem. This truth from the very first was imbedded in their ritual, and consequently from the first their observance of it exercised a beneficial influence upon their spiritual culture. In other religions sacrificial worship hindered rather than helped the development of the moral and spiritual nature. When a heathen man's conceptions became purer he revolted from his religion because its beliefs were absurd and its rites were contemptible ; but among the Israelites the healthier the moral sentiment became, and the higher grew their ideas of what was befitting a man, the more their worship commended itself to them as Divinely inspired and ordained.

For once more, the chief distinction between the biblical and the heathen systems of sacrifice may thus be formulated. The heathen expressed man's endeavour to find out and conciliate Deity, the biblical symbolises sinful man's surrender in trust to God who had found him out. In whatever stage of development or degradation we examine other religions we shall find sacrifice practised with the view either of propitiating the gods, or of forcing them to yield to the will of the sacrificer,

or of enabling him to become as powerful, or even more powerful, than they.¹ Sacrifice is rooted in the belief that man can and must work out his own salvation ; so, by the surrender of a part of what belongs to him, he either purchases a greater good, or is able to retain something which, prized as more valuable, he wills not to part with, or he secures exemption from a penalty which he knows he has incurred. Sacrifice thus instead of implying self-surrender, and binding the sacrificer to the will of Deity, is made the minister of man's selfwill, as binding the gods to serve him. Instead of yielding himself up to God for His service, he endeavours rather to oblige the gods to surrender to him.² We are witnesses to ourselves that this is so, for even after we have become subject to Christ, against His plainest teaching the tendency in our nature breaks forth in endeavours to make religion minister to our lower interests, and advance our selfish aims. The natural man, who is simply the old heathen man, dies hard in regenerate humanity, and even when he is slain he is long in falling away from the life that is being sanctified.

It will be observed that when in the higher forms of heathen religion men have attained to the conviction that the most acceptable offering to Deity is right knowledge and true obedience, it is always conjoined with the belief that man by searching can find out Deity, and does possess in himself all the resources

¹ Fairbairn, *Studies in the Philos. of Relig. and Hist.*, p. 136.

² Maurice, *Sacrifice*, Introd. xliii. seq.

required for perfect obedience. The spirit of cultured heathendom is strongly self-sufficient and self-assertive, and by heathen philosophy these qualities, instead of being condemned, were encouraged and commended as virtuous and praiseworthy. "As it behoves Zeus to know that he is great in himself and in his life, and to speak highly of his own worth, so it behoves good men to do the like, convinced that Zeus is not superior to them."¹ With still prouder self-reliance, Aristotle² held "that magnanimous is the man who estimates his own worth highly, for he who makes too low an estimate of it is a fool." In the same self-assertive spirit Seneca³ reminded men that philosophy promised to elevate them to equality with the gods. They could only, it was true, rise by virtue, which consisted in "the worship of God and the love of men"—*colere divina, humana diligere*; "but by the attainment of virtue men begin to be the companions and not the suppliants of the gods. The way, moreover, is safe and pleasant, and one for which nature has equipped you, for if you but hold fast to what she has given you, you will rise to be equal with Deity."

We are not discussing the effect of this proud reliance upon human nature, this confidence in its capacity to fulfil its ends, upon the general character and conduct of men. Cases are conceivable in which it may have served as a powerful incentive to good, and as a strong safeguard against moral debase-

¹ Plut., *De Stoic. Repugn.*, c. 13.

² *Ethic. Nicom.*, vii. iii. 3.

³ Seneca, *Epistles*, 31, 90; and

De Benef., vii. 3, 4, 6, 10.

ment;¹ but it is with the fact of it that we have to do, and with the contrast presented by it to the spirit of the religion of Israel. The wisest among the heathen found no necessity for sacrifice, for their religion consisted in knowing and being true to themselves. They had in themselves all that was required for their proper guidance and advancement; they were the arbiters of their actions and the masters of their destinies, and if they conducted themselves so as not to lose their own respect they would force the highest gods to respect them. On the other hand, the wise in Israel confessed that man was not sufficient for himself; he neither knew himself, nor was he able to order rightly the way of his life. To the perfect uprightness which might commend him to the Holy One he could not attain, for "there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not."² "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was evil continually."³ This keen sense of universal and personal unrighteousness, dominated by the belief that man was originally created not in unrighteousness, but in the image after the likeness of God, is one of the most characteristic features of the religion of Israel. Israel's conception of the Divine holiness was purer and loftier, and consequently their sense of human sinfulness was more profound and oppressive, than in the case of any other people. Yet the distance that separated them from God, instead of plunging them into despair, roused spiritual aspiration such as never

¹ Farrer, *Paganism and Christianity*, p. 54.

² Ecclesiastes vii. 20.

³ Genesis vi. 5.

was displayed by any stoic believer in the inherent ability of humanity to realise its ideals. This sense of helplessness and guilt made them long for reconciliation, and hope for it as possible, not because they had any faith in themselves, but because they trusted in God, who was showing them the way. So while the heathen philosopher found no necessity for sacrifice in his religion, the Israelite saint felt that he must have a sacrifice to approach God with, because he could not perfectly obey Him. Heathen worship was rooted in man's confidence in his own ability to gain his end, but the worship of Israel, springing from conscious inability, contrition for sin, and hope in God, was an earnest appeal that God would mercifully undertake for man, and provide a "covering" to hide for ever the iniquity which his conscience could not bear.

The highest heathen conception of religion was expressed by Balaam upon the mountains of Peor. Unto that height the moral consciousness of the best of heathens in individual instances did reach. They came to know what Asaph taught, that God was not altogether a man like themselves, a governor who could be bribed to condone wickedness which was not abandoned but persisted in. It was indeed a very sublime conception, indicating plainly that God in electing Israel had not rejected the Gentiles by withholding from them altogether the light which is the life of men. We must not forget, however, that side by side with the psalm ascribed to Asaph is the fifty-first, one peculiarly representative of the religion of Israel.

The man who produced it was the best type of the human race, for he was only one of unnumbered multitudes who vainly endeavoured to wash out his sense of sin by lustration, and to pacify his conscience by sacrifice. Despairing of finding any sacrifice of his own which would appease God, unto him it was revealed that God had provided an acceptable sacrifice in his "broken spirit and contrite heart." In lamenting and confessing "against Thee, Thee only have I sinned," he was really offering what God had prepared in him, by destroying his self-reliance and humbling his pride that he might trust in the living God. When he realised that he had nothing belonging to him but his sin, he was in a condition in which he was qualified to receive what God alone could create and renew in him, "the clean heart and the steadfast spirit." So he found that it was not by doing anything for God, nor by giving anything to God, but by yielding himself up to God, and accepting what God had prepared, that there was restored unto him the assurance of God's favour and the joy of His salvation.¹

The fifty-first psalm is the divinely-provided commentary which interprets the system of sacrifice described in the Old Testament. With all its limitations, and notwithstanding all their misuse of it, that system very powerfully convinced Israel of the sinfulness of man, and of his evil condition because of his sinfulness. Then, over and against this conviction it clearly exhibited the truth that though man has alienated himself

¹ Maurice, *Sacrifice*, p. 94.

from, and cannot justify himself before God, God wills to forgive and redeem him, and has initiated, and is making known his process of reconciliation or way of salvation. According to the Bible, sacrifice instead of being man's endeavour to propitiate God, is God's divinely revealed method of atoning or covering man's sin. God and not man is the originator of the acceptable sacrifice. The only sacrifice that can atone or cover sin must be devised, prepared, and consummated by God. The foundation of all reconciliation must be sought for in His eternal will and unchangeable purpose to maintain His order of inflexible holiness, and restore all men to its blessedness. The heathen notion, which alas has too long survived in some theologies, is that God had to be bargained with by man, or by some one acting on man's behalf, to procure His forgiveness. The truth revealed in Scripture "bit by bit," as men were able to receive it, is that God's forgiveness and plenteous redemption are set forth in the sacrifice of Christ as His own sovereign act of grace, for which He is to be everlastingly adored as the Author and Finisher of our faith. Consequently what we learn from the Gospel is not that sacrifice is worthless, but rather that its worth is superlative, as absolutely indispensable in true religion. The dogma to be received and confessed is not that obedience is better than sacrifice, but that true obedience is impossible unless rooted in sacrifice. The sacrifice, however, which bears this fruit of true obedience is neither procured nor offered by man, it is originated and set forth and completed by God. Be-

hind and beneath our “full purpose of and endeavour after new obedience,” our repentance must spring from a work of God done for us, to which we can add nothing and from which we can take nothing away. That work is the atonement revealed in the Lamb “slain from the foundation of the world,” which so far from being exhibited in the Bible as the procuring cause of God’s good will, is revealed as the method which from pure good will He seeks to save from misery a sinful race, and reconcile them to Himself.

The contrasts which we have been considering between the sacrifices described in the Old Testament, and those of all other religions, surely indicate a special dispensation in the case of one people, whereby their religious instinct was divinely disciplined and informed by enlarging disclosures of truth as ages passed. The end of this Divine education was to prepare them to receive and to declare the revelation of the mystery in which all men are concerned. In specially training the people of Israel for this mission the Gentiles were not overlooked. If Jehovah sought to “consecrate” Israel, it was for the sake of the Gentiles that they also might “be sanctified through the truth.” We shall endeavour in the next two lectures to indicate in the sacrifices of the great heathen world, from its lowest to its highest grades, some foreshadowings or preparations for the revelation of the sacrifice of God. We hope to show that while the highest heathen minds were providentially led to reach out after the Divine revelation,

there was divinely maintained in the most degraded sections of heathen humanity the capacity to receive it. Coarse and absurd as were their superstitions, and corrupt as were the rites by which they expressed them, they served to furnish ideas, sentiments, a phraseology which formed an intellectual and spiritual mould, rude indeed and defiled and broken, in which the revelation when it was presented to them could be received as readily as it was by the most cultured of mankind. We do not maintain that heathendom was expecting its Messiah; nor do we maintain that the Israelites under their sacrificial system were taught to look forward to the sacrifice which would completely abrogate it. The Israelites in all probability considered sufficient the measure of revelation accorded to them, and whatever they may have expected, they certainly did not expect the revelation which was ultimately given. But we maintain that the economy of the Law and the Prophets was a preparation without which the revelation recorded in the New Testament would not have been possible; and we also maintain that all other religions, if correctly observed, will show that however far men have swerved from the truth, they have not been allowed to fall out of the scope of God's redemptive purpose. At whatever point of development or degradation men confront us, they confess to necessities and beliefs which only the Gospel which fulfils them can interpret. The design of all great movements in Providence is only apparent when the end is reached. And the sacrifice of Christ,

although, as has been truly observed,¹ it was not a sacrifice after any Jewish or Gentile form known to us, does yet so interpret and satisfy all that mankind everywhere sought to obtain by their peculiar and solemn rites, that we can truly say that what Jew and Gentile were unconsciously feeling after was the Divine redemption secured through His blood.

¹ Jowett, *Epistle of St. Paul*, ii. 562.

LECTURE II

SACRIFICE IN ANIMISM AND LOWER POLYTHEISM

THE contrasts which separate the savage from the civilised man are numerous and very emphatic. His ways are not our ways, his thoughts are not our thoughts. His gods are devils in our esteem, while "no spiritual being in his mythology possesses the characteristics of Satan." His religion is expressed in very revolting orgies and ferocious rites, involving the immolation of human victims, and tortures inflicted upon himself. Strangest of all, his worship in some cases is directed only to powers that are malevolent, for he reasons that it would be wasted upon the friendly and is only required to buy off the hostile.¹ Yet in spite of contradictions which seem to imply only antipodal relations to him, we are compelled, as soon as he confronts us in his wretchedness, to admit his claim to essential brotherhood with us. For, after all, the terms "savage," "barbarian," "civilised," applied to different sections of mankind, are not absolute but relative. They

¹ Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific*, vol. ii. p. 1; Lubbock, *Origin of Civ.*, p. 202, 4th ed.; Tylor *Prim. Cult.*, vol. ii. pp. 296-7.

designate only broad and shifting stages of human history. On the surface of the highest civilisation are found resemblances to barbarism which are as striking as its contrasts, and we have only to pierce it but very slightly to discover unmistakable traces of not very ancient savagery.

The attention which has been increasingly directed to those suggestive resemblances indicates an entirely new departure in the study of religion. Following the lead given long ago by Clement and Eusebius,¹ Outram and Spencer² became the pioneers of the science of Comparative Religion. Their range of research was limited to the classical literature of Greece and Rome, and the writings of the Jewish Rabbins; but now the recovery of the great literatures and monuments of Egypt and of the East has not only enlarged the field of research, it has also enabled us to verify or correct at first hand what their authorities only learned from hearsay. In addition the intellectual horizon includes peoples who have left behind them neither literature nor monuments, and it is maintained by some prominent expounders of the new science, that every inquiry into religion should either start from the beliefs and rites of such peoples, or should be constantly controlled and checked by reference to them.³ The aim is to discover what are called primitive beliefs, and it is assumed that these are more likely to be found in the unwritten traditions of barbarous peoples than in the oldest litera-

¹ *Stromata ; Præp. Evangelii.*

² *Op. cit. supra ;* also Fontanelle, *Origin of Fables.*

³ Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, pref. p. viii.

ture extant. The coarse superstition of the savage is thus for scientific purposes as valuable as the religion of the most civilised of ancient nations. Yea, one volume of folk-lore and custom gathered from the most abject aboriginal tribes may outweigh in respect of materials a whole library of sacred books of the East.

While neither supporting nor controverting the theory that the crude conceptions of the savage represent the germs out of which during innumerable ages of struggle our highest religious beliefs have been developed, we thankfully avail ourselves of such light as Mannhardt,¹ Bancroft, Tylor, Lubbock, M'Lennan, Frazer, and many others have thrown upon the sacrifice of peoples found in the lowest strata of humanity. Our most correct knowledge of what man is must be derived not merely from contemplation of the height to which he has risen, but also of the depth from which he has sprung, or into which he has fallen. Nothing which man in the lowest stage of existence has thought or felt about religion can be useless or unimportant for us to know. If we accept the unity of the human race as a clearly established fact, if we believe that all over the world, in spite of much external diversity, the life in every human being indicates a common fountain, manifests the same ancestral taint and points forward to a common destiny, then there is not a feature even of savage humanity without significance for us, nor is

¹ Mannhardt, *Der Baum-Kultus und Feld-Kulte*, 1877; *Mythologische Forschungen*, 1884.
der Germanen und ihrer Nachbarstämme, 1875; *Antike Wald-*

there a savage custom, however revolting, from which some lesson may not be drawn. If only we have sufficient patience to consider, and sufficient sympathy to interpret them, we shall find that while the rites are rude and most disgusting, the beliefs which inspired them, and the intention which they expressed, may be regarded as crude and embryonic types of the Faith which all over the world is being accepted as the true ground of human hope, the true source of human comfort.

It is a significant fact that what has been called "the abstruse metaphysical doctrine of the Atonement" has only to be properly presented to savage peoples to be readily apprehended and heartily believed. The history of missions powerfully instructs us that the secret of the success of Christianity is the revelation of the Cross of its Founder. Even in grades of humanity as low as those represented by hordes herding like animals, having no fixed habitations, but only coverings of bark and leaves, and holes in the earth when these materials fail them, the story of the Divine sacrifice has only to be told to produce an effect like that of a new creation. Intelligence has been evoked, the moral sense, so feeble as to seem extinct, has been quickened, the brute in the nature sinks, and the man, conscious that he is not what he ought to be, rises and flees to the Divine mercy. What some anthropologists assert the savage never manifests, the sense of sin, missionaries everywhere assure us the savage experiences when confronted by that supreme expression of

love given in the substitution of the Divine man for the sinner.¹ These are truths which mankind are capable of receiving only at certain stages of intellectual development. "The soil of ideas is the same,"² but like the soil it has to be cultivated before the germs of certain truths can sprout in it. There is a long series represented in the development of the earth's capacity to produce at first only the microscopic growths found upon the summits of our oldest mountains, and then ages after the rich grass or grain covering its plains. In like manner there is a great and prolonged travail of intellectual culture represented by many stages, between man's earliest recorded explanations of natural phenomena and those of our latest science. Now the marvel is that while the minds of even civilised men have to be educated to receive and believe certain scientific truths, this so-called abstruse dogma of the sacrifice of God for man commends itself to the most degraded members of the human race, and proves among them, as it does among the most highly cultured, "the power of God unto salvation." This is a fact in religion of no mean significance, and however it is to be explained we seem justified in finding in it a manifest adaptation of the truth disclosed to man's elemental necessities as a moral and spiritual creature.

It is so difficult to ascertain the beliefs of savages, that it is no wonder some observers have concluded that they have no religion at all. This conclusion is as erroneous as the other one, that they have no moral

¹ *History of Moravian Missions*, pp. 198, 281, 373, 440.

² Müller, *Physical Religion*, p. 211.

standard, and are even devoid of the moral sentiment. Though not expressed in formal precepts, savages have a very binding standard in an uncoded consensus of public opinion. A savage, far from being free to do as he pleases, is governed by a most complicated set of customs, which form in some cases the most despotic of tyrannies. He has a strong sense of law, thus understood, though his sense of right may be so feeble as to regard theft and murder virtues if practised against strangers. The fact that he regards them as tokens of "vir" in the individual, is itself an evidence of the moral sentiment either imperfectly developed or greatly corrupted.¹ And so it is in regard to religion. The very rudest savage practises periodically certain rites, which, when properly examined, are found to be rooted in religious beliefs. His religion, however, is a mystery, in which the stranger and the uninitiated have neither lot nor part. Their presence when he practises it would be profanity; and the divulgence of its secrets is considered a sacrilege to be avoided, even as it would be punished by his own death. It is difficult, therefore, in many cases to ascertain the real intention of his ceremonies; and the difficulty is increased by the fact that he has no organised system of belief. His mental condition is chaotic, his thoughts are confused and corrupt, broken together without order or any attempt at classification. There are great differences in the degree of intellectual capacity among savages, but there

¹ Quatrefages, *L'Espèce Humaine*, 10th edition, 1890, p. 482; Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. i. p. 380.

are several conceptions common to all, which, as regulating their relations and the daily business of life, may be regarded as their unformulated creed.

The religion of the savage is best described by the word Animism. It is founded upon the very realistic opinion that in everything complex there is a spirit, which forms its unity.¹ Any object which strikes his ignorant imagination forcibly enough, induces the belief that it is as living and conscious as he is himself. He conceives of himself and of it as doubles, having within them miniature selves of more subtle and less tangible materials, moving and inspiring all their actions. Thus, all things in the world are to him personal beings, moved and directed as he is, not by soul, in our sense of the word as immaterial and immortal, but by this double inner self, incorporate in them. It is his way of explaining his personal activity, and the inactivity of death, which to him is the result of the inner self departing or being willed or stolen away. As to where the inner self goes after death, he does not generally know, and is not curious to inquire, for to him the only life worth living is the life that now is, and his vigilant endeavour is to save and keep it, by preventing the inner self from leaving or from being extracted from his body by an enemy.²

And his enemies are innumerable, being represented

¹ Renan, *History of the People of Israel*, i. p. 35.

² Burton, *Abeokuta*, i. p. 204 ; Williams, *Fiji and Fijians*, i. p. 242 ; Mariner, *Tonga Islands*,

ii. p. 138 ; *Journal of Anthropol. Instit.*, viii. p. 282 ; *Relations of the Jesuits in Canada*, 1639, p. 43 ; Rinks, *Tales and Traditions of the Eskimo*.

not only by the visible and tangible, but by such invisible and intangible forces as the stormy wind and the thunder, and the ghostly shadows that haunt him in nightmare. The events in his dreams are considered by him to be as real as those of his waking hours.¹ Everything strange to him is regarded as sinister in its intent; every unknown face is that of an enemy, or of one who is bent more upon injuring than helping him. He is thus living in a world all the more dangerous that the distinction drawn by us between the natural and supernatural is hardly conceivable by him. And yet he can afford to move about in it with considerable confidence, for all the powers or beings by which he is surrounded, even when hostile, are believed to occupy relations of tolerable equality to himself. Some may be confessed to be stronger or more ferocious than himself, but they all act upon impulses and from motives like his own, and all are as liable as he is to be influenced by fear, and hope, and self-interest. His relations to them are so conceived that he imagines he can not only match, but even manipulate them to his own advantage. If they do not yield to his persuasions, or promises, or coaxings, he can protect himself against their ill-will, and even compel them to do or to grant what he wishes.²

This he believes he can do by the power of his fetish. Now Fetishism, though generally referred to as a very low form of religion, can hardly be called a religion.

¹ Lubbock, *Origin of Civilisation and Primitive Condition of Man*, 4th edition, p. 214 seq.

p. 31; Keary, "Early Religious Development," *Nineteenth Cent. Mag.*, August 1878.

² Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, i.

Lubbock¹ has properly described it as essentially "anti-religious," for though recognising a ritual of sacrifice, the savage practises it not as worship to express homage to a superior, but as sorcery to control or coerce him. The fetish, though it may be a likeness or substitute of the object which he fears, is the reverse of an idol. It is not an object of reverence commanding a worshipper, but a means devised to capture an invisible power, and to keep it under control. The savage employs it just as he uses some rude imitation which he has made of his enemy, or when, unequal to that effort, just as he uses some part of his enemy which he has been able to procure. Armed with a few of his hairs, a bit of his nails, a little of his saliva, or a crumb of his food,² he believes that he has his enemy thoroughly at his command; for what he does to these things is so felt by his enemy that, when they are injured he is wounded, and when they are destroyed he cannot survive. The ritual of fetishism, therefore, is not religious either in character or intent, but purely magical. Supported by it the savage can confront even the play of the mighty forces of nature without much concern. Unlike his civilised brother, who, the more he knows and learns to utilise the laws of nature, is the more impressed by his helplessness, he, with a very limited range of thought and imagination, believes that he can influence the course of nature to an almost limitless extent.

¹ *Loc. cit.* p. 343.

Inhabitants, pp. 86, 167; Turner, *Nineteen Years in Polynesia*, p.

² Taylor, *New Zealand and its* 90.

Just as he may overpower his foes in flesh and blood by force, or circumvent them by cunning, so he fancies that by spells and charms he can reduce and keep under his control the forces which we consider untameable. He has traditions of an ancestor who caught and wrestled with the sun till he forced him to reveal his name, and so lamed him as to make him ever after move through the sky at a more moderate pace. He has heard of another hero who shut up the sun in a cave for weeks ; and so it is easy for him to believe that by certain rites he can delay or hasten the close of day, cause the rain to fall, and rouse or silence the storm. In like manner he can defend himself against the ills which we consider the inevitable entail or heritage of human life. Sickness and death in the savage conception are not natural events, but the work of an enemy ; but by the medicine of his wise man sickness can be extracted or expelled from the body ; and when death has become the lot of a kinsman, the foe who caused it can similarly be found out and destroyed.¹

In practising fetishism and shamanism—which latter is just a higher form of fetishism designed to influence and compel gods not identified with the powers of nature, but supposed to be superior to man and to be

¹ Williams, *Polynesian Researches*, vol. ii. p. 228 ; Shortland, *Traditions of the New Zealanders*, p. 117 ; Bonwick, *Daily Life of the Tasmanians*, p. 178 ; Dubois, *Description of the People of India*, p. 347 ; De Brosses, *Du Culte des dieux fetiches* ;

Smyth, *Aborigines of Victoria*, vol. ii. p. 384 ; Carr, *Australian Races*, vol. iii. p. 145 ; Astley, *Collection of Voyages*, vol. ii. p. 217 ; Lubbock, *Origin of Civilisation*, p. 328 ; Frazer, *Golden Bough*, i. pp. 24, 25.

living in a higher world of their own—savage and barbarous peoples act in self-defence against powers believed to be dangerous, or likely to be used for their advantage.¹ The real religion, however, of a savage is the outcome of another belief, and is expressed by different rites. It is rooted in the peculiar conceptions which he has formed of his relations to the animal and vegetable kingdoms of nature. He is simply confused with a world of being from which we are separated by an abyss. All things animate and even inanimate, occupying as he thinks a common level of life and passion, are related to him as superiors, inferiors, or equals. He is distinguished from them not by his nature but only by his personality, and he treats them accordingly ; those which he dreads because of their ferocity he propitiates, and he conciliates those which he must use for his sustenance. In felling a tree, or in slaying an animal he believes he exposes himself to the vengeance of its kindred just as if he had slain a man. So in all such cases he apologises for the act, entreats his victims not to be angry, and by various devices tries to appease them, and make compensation to their kin for their loss. Zoolatry is thus almost universal among savages, and instead of the fear of man being upon the animal, the fear of the animal is too much upon the man.²

¹ *Siberia and the Polar Sea*, p. 123 ; Graali, *Voyage to Greenland*, p. 123 ; Williams, *Fiji and the Fijians*, vol. i. p. 224 ; Myers, *The Greek Oracles*, pp. 7, 8.

² In cutting up animals for cooking, some savage tribes are very careful to lay aside the eyes, ears, lungs, and other special organs. Some tribes so

In addition to the creatures which have to be propitiated or conciliated when slain for the sake of their flesh or skin, there are particular animals which are never slain, and never molested because held to be sacred as kindred. They are considered to be related to the savage horde not "as a patron saint was adopted by a mediæval knight"¹ but in the most literal of senses. The blood in the veins of both is supposed to be identical ; they believe that they are united by physical descent from it, or with it from a common ancestor. In some instances that human ancestor is supposed to live in the animal in disguise, and so not only the ancient doctrine of transmigration, but the modern theory of man's evolution from the animals, is believed and employed by the lowest savages to account for their origin.²

This phase of zoolatry, designated Totemism, prevailed among the North American Indians, and has been found in various parts of the world. Indeed traces or survivals of it are discoverable in the folk-lore and customs of the most civilised nations. The problem of

widely separated as the North American Indian and the Arabs will thus not eat of the "sinew of the thigh." In other cases not a bone of the animal must be broken ; and in others again, when the carcase has been dismembered and the flesh has been consumed, the bones are carefully arranged in anatomical order, and buried so that the creature may find a resurrection in the under world. Brunton, *Myths*

of the New World, p. 279 ; Petittot, *Indian Traditions of N. W. Canada*, p. 32 ; Hodgson, *Letters from North America*, vol. i. p. 244 ; Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, ii. p. 124, note p. 132 ; Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 360, note.

¹ Bancroft, *Nat. Races*, vol. iii. p. 128.

² Schoolcraft, *Archæol.*, vol. v. p. 215 ; *Folk Lore Record*, vol. ii. p. 22.

its origin is admitted to be still unsolved. The practice of naming a man and his family after a particular animal instead of accounting for the superstition may have been originated by it. Herbert Spencer,¹ who finds its origin in a "misinterpretation of nicknames" of particular animals first applied to individuals, and afterwards confounded with their ancestors already revered, "attributes to verbal misunderstandings far more influence than in spite of the so-called comparative mythology, they ever seem to have exercised."² The hypothesis which founds it in the desire to claim descent from the animals which are superior to man in strength, or cunning, or longevity,³ is contradicted by the fact that frequently the totem is a creature inferior to man as, for example, the turtle, the beaver, and even the mouse. One of the cleverest guesses is that lately advanced by Mr. Frazer,⁴ who accounts for it by the endeavour to guard the double or inner self by externalising and hiding it in some natural object. According to this superstition, traces of which survive in many of our own nursery tales, so closely connected is the man with the creature in which his life is supposed to be hid, that he will pant when it is chased, faint when it faints, and die if it be killed. And yet as long as it is uninjured he is believed to be invulnerable.⁵ This explanation throws

¹ *Principles of Sociology*, vol. 260, 334.
i. p. 367.

⁴ *The Golden Bough*, ii. pp.

² Frazer, Art. in *Ency. Brit.*, 279, 335.
vol. xxiii. pp. 467-476.

⁵ *Anthrop. Institute Rev.*, xv.

³ Lubbock, *loc. cit.* pp. 206, p. 416, and xviii. p. 56.

some light upon the yearly "dances" by which savage youths of both sexes are matriculated into the rights and responsibilities of clanship. Circumcision, the "savage rite of confirmation," is a prominent feature in these ceremonies, and through the operation the individual is admitted into the life of the tribe and hence of its totem, just as in the ancient mysteries candidates through severe exercise were initiated into communion with the god. The object of the whole function is said to be the extraction of the "double" and its transference to the totem. As it proceeds the youth is supposed to die, being really thrown into a deathlike trance, and his recovery, accounted as a resurrection, is attributed to fresh life infused into him from his totem. With good right therefore does he call himself ever after by its name, seeing he believes that he has died to his own old life, and lives only by the life which he has with it and from it.¹

Whatever be the explanation, Totemism is a phase of religion. The totem is regarded as so sacred on account of the mysterious connection existing between it and the savage clan that no member dare kill it, or eat of its flesh, or wear its skin.² If a god is conceived of apart from the totem, the animal is regarded as the living nexus between the god and the clan, and is treated not only with affection but reverence as more essential to the general welfare than any other kinsman. Rela-

¹ Chalmers, *Pioneering in New Guinea*, p. 85; Bentley, *Life on the Congo*, p. 78; Catlin, *North American Indians*, i. p. 36 seq.

² Casalis, *The Basutos*, p. 211; Livingstone, *Travels in South Africa*, p. 13; Dalton, *Ethnolog. Description of Bengal*, p. 254.

tionship is determined by the totem, for the individual is born of its stock, and from it kinship is reckoned. All so related to the totem are mutually obliged to fight for and defend and avenge each other, while outside of that circle of kinship no obligation is acknowledged or even felt. "The sanctity of a kinsman's life and that of the totem are not two things but one; for ultimately the only thing that is sacred is the blood, which is identified with the common tribal life, and whoever partakes in that life is sacred in the estimation of all the clan."¹

Among our Aryan ancestors archaic worship was that of the family, and the earliest traceable sacrifice was the domestic meal; but savages have no family, the wife never eats with her lord, who feeds just when he can. Savages, however, are said to feast together as a clan upon certain occasions, and to these feasts only kinsmen are admitted. They are sacrificial in their import, for all slaughter of animals unless of those killed in hunting is serious, and a domestic animal can only be slaughtered with the consent of the clan, and for its use. According to the savage creed, feasting seals friendship, and maintains full and strong for the common benefit the life of all. If at such a feast the god was supposed to be present, it was not to ratify any compact between kinsmen, but as a kinsman to share with them what was provided, to renew mutual

¹ Prof. Robertson Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, p. 186 seq.; *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 82, 271; M'Lennan,

Worship of Plants and Animals; Fortnightly Review, October and November 1869, and February 1870.

obligations and promote solid fellowship.¹ So the savage idea of sacrifice, though involving an act of homage, is far removed from that of tribute rendered as tax, or from that of fine paid to appease wrath, or of bribe offered to secure goodwill. Rooted in confidence in the goodwill of the god as one with the clan and really interested in its welfare, the feast, no matter how revolting it may appear to us, is an act of communion, a sacrament rather than a sacrifice. It would indeed be illegitimate to connect their coarse conception of physical union with their totem with the idea of spiritual communion with Deity which inspires our loftiest act of Christian worship ; but surely it is interesting to find in the very lowest strata of humanity the sense that through special exercises and acts, man, in virtue of one sphere of his nature, can hold intercourse with power believed to be divine. It is also worthy of note that such religion as does exist, instead of expressing abject terror of the gods, is inspired by trust in their kindly intent, and by desire to promote good fellowship with them.

The materials for an ordinary clan feast would, generally speaking, be such as could be offered to the totem, for upon no occasion could a savage eat of that which he could not present to it. Whatever the totem was supposed to affect would be acceptable, and specially acceptable would be the totem of a hostile or alien tribe. If the totem were carnivorous, flesh and blood would be shared with it ; if the clan were cannibal,

¹ *Religion of the Semites*, p. 294.

they would feast with the god upon a human victim when such could be procured by the capture of an enemy or of a stranger. Not even cannibals, however, will eat the flesh of a kinsman whose life is the same as their own, and for the same reason the life of the sacred animal was strictly protected not merely by law but by religion. It was not only a crime which would surely be visited by the vengeance of man, but also a sacrilege which the god would severely punish by misfortune and fearful disaster. This belief, as far as zoolatry has left any traces of itself, appears to have been universal. Injury or slaughter inflicted upon the sacred animal was regarded as not only a criminal invasion of the sanctity of kinship, but also as an assault upon one on whose life and strength the health and prosperity of the whole clan depended. So unpardonable, therefore, was the atrocity that leprosy, madness, and dreadful death were considered its just, yea its natural penalty.¹

¹ Herodotus, ii. 47; Plutarch, *De Superstition.*, c. 10; and *Isis et Osiris*, 8; Ælian, *Nat. Anim.*, x. 16; Turner, *Samoa*, p. 17 *seq.*, p. 50 *seq.*; Mariner, *Tonga Islands*, i. 434, ii. 82, 222 *seq.*; M'Kenzie, *The Orange River*, p. 135; Frazer, *Golden Bough*, ii. p. 51; Art. "Totemism," *Ency. Brit.*, vol. xxiii. p. 468; Tylor, *Prim. Cult.*, ii. p. 213 *seq.*

In this belief Mr. Frazer and Professor Robertson Smith find the explanation of tabooed animals or creatures regarded as unclean. They suggest that a savage conception of sanctity and

uncleanness may not have been differentiated. The savage regards it dangerous to eat, or touch, or look at what he considers very sacred, just as if it was "uncanny." In Isaiah lxxv. 3-4, and lxxvi. 3, 17, the eaters of the abominable sacrifices in the gardens are represented as saying: "Stand off, for we will *sanctify* them," in the heathen sense of injuring, not in the Bible sense of purifying. The savage's idea of uncleanness was as far removed from the biblical idea of it as was his idea of holiness. His ideas of both are said to have met in his

Yet although it was most sacred, as instinct with their own life and that of the god, there were occasions of public calamity when it must be slain in order to preserve them from destruction. It is to be observed that on all occasions, when under the pressure of necessity, it must give up its life for its clan, the savage made a sacrifice of its slaughter. It was slain with the greatest publicity, for as far as was possible every kinsman was held as a consenting party and made a partaker of the act, so that the responsibility for it was equally and universally distributed. The life was taken with the greatest precaution so as to clear the actual slayer of the charge of murder. Devices were resorted to, survivals of which are found in the altar rites of ancient Greece, by which the animal was made to appear a willing victim freely surrendering its life. In some cases the slayer was attacked; the axe which he had used was tried, condemned, and cast away; while over the victim as great lamentation was made as for a slain kinsman and chief.¹

conception of taboo, which, applied to animals, meant that they were sacrosanct rather than polluted. So originally the pig may have been forbidden to the Egyptians, as the bear was to the Iroquois, and the deer to the Khonds of India, because it was sacred. It was spared from slaughter and defended from injury because supposed to be the visible and essential bond be-

tween the clan and the god on whose life the prosperity of the clan depended. — Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, ii. p. 49; Campbell, *Wild Tribes of Khondistan*, p. 26; Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, ii. 51 seq.; Art. "Taboo," *Ency. Brit.*, xxiii. pp. 15-18; Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 272.

¹ Porphyry, *De Abst.*, ii. 29 seq.; Pausanias, i. 24, 4, and i.

In addition to these exceptional occasions, when the animal, *although* sacred, was sacrificed for the common good, on the ground that necessity knows no law, there were periodical occasions when it was sacrificed just *because* it was sacred, and therefore the only proper victim. It had to yield its flesh and blood for its clan when in perfect health and strength, and entirely free from blemish or fault, because it thus embodied at its very best the life which was to be given for them. The whole aim of savage totemistic observance was to secure the healthy maintenance of the life-bond between the god and the clan. On this account the life which was so precious to them must be kept full and strong in the sacred animal. Their care of it was similar to the attention which the Egyptians lavished upon their sacred bulls; for by neither people was the sacred animal allowed to grow old, or to become feeble, or to die a natural death. Should that catastrophe occur, the consequences would be unspeakably evil, and so both peoples found a ready mode of averting it by the sacrifice of the animal before it showed the slightest symptom of decay. An opportunity was thus afforded of transferring its life into a more vigorous successor. If the victim was slain in a condition of disease or of declining strength, the life transferred would be correspondingly enfeebled, and so by killing it when free from every blemish, and from the slightest symptom of decline, they secured the

28, 10; Varro, *De Re Rustica*, ii.
5, 4; Robertson Smith, *Religion
of the Semites*, p. 286 seq.; Frazer,

The Golden Bough, ii. p. 39 seq.;
Lang, *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*,
ii. p. 232.

transference of its life at the very best for revival in another and stronger embodiment.¹

The Egyptians maintained their sacred bulls in more than royal state and luxury for over twenty years, and then drowned them with great solemnity ; but some barbarous peoples sacrificed their sacred animals annually, at periods marked by the lowering of the temperature and the fading and death of vegetation. The vastness of the scale upon which this yearly decay occurs, together with man's intimate dependence upon nature for subsistence, has always and everywhere affected powerfully the untutored mind. In such climatic conditions life is low, and mortality increases among ill-fed, scantily-clad, and rudely sheltered peoples. Their own lives and the life of all things seem to be imperilled, and the danger to nature and man must be averted at any cost. To this end the life that is most precious because most sacred, must be sacrificed ; and more than sacrificed. Believing that they and the victim

¹ Probably this superstition accounts for the custom, to us so unnatural, of killing beloved parents and honoured chiefs and ministers of religion. Turner (*Samoa*, p. 335) tells us a Polynesian chief counted it a disgrace not to be buried alive ; and that peoples, not savage like the Polynesian, but civilised like the East Indians, killed their kings and their priests in the fulness of their strength, has been abundantly proved by the many instances cited in the *Golden Bough*, vol. i. p. 214

seq., and ii. p. 220 *seq.* In some cases they had to commit suicide, when the limit of their supposed usefulness was reached ; in others they were allowed to retain office only as long as they could defend their own life against violent assault. The reason in all such cases is found in the belief that the divine life was in them for the sake of those whom they ruled and served, and so it was essential that it should never be allowed to deteriorate.

had a life in common, they sought to obtain the incorporation with their own of the life which was slain on their behalf in the most realistic of ways. The sacred victim must not only give its life for them, it must give itself to them. They must eat of the flesh and drink of the blood of their sacrifice in order to having its life renewed in themselves. Such sacrifices were wholly consumed by the sacrificers, and after a most disgusting fashion. In the oldest form of Arab sacrifice, described by Prof. Robertson Smith,¹ the sacred animal was bound upon a rude altar of stone, and when the slaughterer had led the worshipper round it in procession to the chanting of spells, he inflicted the first wound, and "while the last words of the wild chant were upon the lips of the others, he hastened to drink the warm gushing blood. Forthwith all proceeded to hack the still living animal with their knives, and to devour the quivering flesh in such haste that in the short interval between the rise of the day-star, which marked the commencement of the rite, and the melting away of its rays in the sunrise, the entire body, skin, and entrails were consumed." Similar sacrifices—for example, that of a cow buffalo by the people of Todas, that of the lamb by the negro tribe of Morus, and notably that of the bear in Japan, described by Mrs. Gordon Cumming and by Miss Bird—present the same horrible features.² Yet when

¹ *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 301, 319.

² Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, 1885, pp. 269, 275 *seq.*; Reed, *Japan*, vol. i. p. 446; Mar-

shall, *Travels among the Todas*, p. 129 *seq.*; Felkins, "Notes on the Madi or Morn Tribe of Central Africa," *Proceed. Royal Society, Edin.*, vol. vii. 1882, p.

we master the revulsion excited by the record of such rites, and endeavour to inquire into their intention, we find that, though self-interest was the all-prevailing motive in them, the orgies were not attributable to cruel self-gratification. The desire to secure the life-powers of the sacred animal in all their strength, accounts for all that is revolting. Savages, who have to endure much physical suffering, make light of inflicting it; but their purpose in devouring the living flesh and warm blood of the victim was not to cause pain. They believed that thus they would recruit their own physical vigour from the source which they considered the most sacred.

For the same reason, when they performed such a sacrifice, they were careful to consume the whole carcase, so that none of its efficacy might be lost. What on any occasion they could not wholly eat, was scrupulously buried or destroyed; for, should an enemy get possession of a hair of the victim, or the least fragment of its bones, he could by sorcery work through it upon all of them the most deadly mischief, and render futile their most earnest endeavour to transfer to themselves the "vir" of their sacrifice.¹

336 seq. ; *Golden Bough*, ii. 100 seq.

¹ The belief is widespread and deep rooted among barbarous peoples that the peculiar quality of an animal is transferred to the eater of it. The North American Indians loved venison because it made them swift; the South American Indians eschewed heavy

meat because it made them sluggish. The eating of hares and timorous creatures was supposed to make men faint-hearted, while the flesh and blood of lions, tigers, and wolves gave courage and vigour to the fearful and feeble. Cannibal savages everywhere, and some peoples not savages, have complimented their dead enemies

With their annual sacrifices, intended to reinforce the divine life in a savage clan, there was often associated the annual cleansing of the kraal and the expulsion of evils from the land. Weakness, sickness, and death being always attributed to sorcery or to the interference of malignant beings, a special endeavour was made upon such occasions to exorcise and banish them. All over the savage world the new year was inaugurated by ceremonies designed to secure this end. They were generally preceded or followed by a period of license, though among some North American tribes

by devouring their hearts ; yea, some tribes have eaten the ashes of their forefathers, to whom they paid Divine honours, in order to become possessed of their virtues. — Bancroft, *Nat. Races of the Pacific*, iii. 316 ; Dalton, *Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 33 ; Adair's *History of the American Indians*, p. 133 ; St. John, *Life in the Forests of the Far East*, i. pp. 186, 206 ; Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, i. 358 ; Callaway, *Nursery Tales and Traditions, and History of the Zulus*, p. 163, *note* ; Buchanan, *The Shire Highlands*, p. 138 ; Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, i. p. 166, and ii. 85 *seq.*

The same beliefs which inspired the savage to devour his living sacrifice, accounts for all customs by which men seek to unite themselves with one another, or with a god. The blood covenant with the living, in which two persons become one by mingling or drinking each other's blood ; the

mourner's covenant with the dead, sealed by the shedding of his own blood upon the corpse, are traceable to it. In like manner, tattooing among savages at puberty, like the stigmata of the Syrian priests, is a symbol and pledge that a life bond has been established between the totem or god and the worshipper. But wherever there was laceration needed, the wounding had almost no value, though the blood set free and its application had much. The savage revered it as the life ; and in sacrificing the sacred animal, it was not its death that was supposed to do good, but the life which he desired to appropriate. — Reville, *Hibbert Lecture*, 1884, p. 219 ; Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 303, 306, 316 ; *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, p. 213 *seq.* ; Spener, *De Leg. Heb.*, ii. 14 ; Trumbull, *The Blood Covenant*, p. 7 *seq.*

they were introduced by scrupulous cleansing of the wigwam and all its furniture, and by purification of the body, not only externally, but also internally by the use of cathartics. In such ceremonies the sacred animal was sacrificed with special solemnity, and upon it was laid the accumulated misfortunes and troubles of the whole tribe. The custom, however, was not universally associated with the death of a victim. Some South Sea Islanders, and some tribes in Borneo, used to pack the evils that afflicted them in a prao and send them out to sea ; and some aboriginal tribes in India still inclose them in a jar, which they consign to the river. In a great many instances reported from all quarters, however, a victim was demanded. By some tribes a miserable human being was actually slaughtered ; by others the human victim was bound to a stake along with the animal one, and when it was slain he was driven away into the jungle or desert, as one whom no one dare lodge or feed or even converse with, because he had become accursed on account of the load of evil which he was supposed to bear away.¹

In all these cases, pathetic travesties of solemnities described in the Old Testament, the sacrifice though piacular was performed without any moral intention. It was not offered to procure forgiveness for offences then confessed, or to reconcile the offerers with an

¹ Bancroft, *Native Races*, etc., iii. 168 ; Frazer, *Totemism*, p. 48 ; *The Golden Bough*, ii. pp. 48, 203, 206 ; Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 386 ;

Crowther, *The Gospel on the Banks of the Niger*, pp. 343-345 ; *Allgemeine Missions - Zeitschrift*, xii. (1885), pp. 476, 478.

alienated god. It is a misuse of language to call it the "savage day of atonement,"¹ for of the expiatory rites described in the Old Testament the savage had no conception, and such ideas as he formed of his own could not possibly have intruded into the ceremonials described in the Old Testament. His sacrifices proceeded from no sense of wrong-doing or wrong-being in our sense of the word. He simply desired to defend himself by purging his land of the ills to which human life is liable. When the sacred animal died to give its life for and to him, it was understood to do so in the most realistic sense. So if he had evil to expel from his village it was only such evil as is represented by trouble or disease or death, or by the hostile powers which brought them upon him, and he sought to expel them by no other means than magic and sorcery.

It is surely, however, a fact of great and solemn import, that in the very lowest strata or debris of humanity, there are found ideas and sentiments suggesting analogies to the lofty spiritual truths of our religion. The customs are horrible, but the beliefs upon which they rest, if they have been correctly interpreted for us, constitute a powerful appeal to our sympathetic consideration. In reading such expositions of savage religious rites as we have referred to, we are always haunted by the fear that the interpreter has unconsciously put into them not a little of what he professes to have found. It is very difficult to guard against the *subreptio vilis*, and to keep ourselves from

¹ *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 389, 392.

reading into them our own beliefs. We do well, however, to deal generously with the very lowest religions, and to interpret them more by their reach than by their actual grasp. In any case there have been brought to light by these researches materials which can surely be utilised by the Christian missionary in repairing the desolations and in rebuilding the ruined shrines of humanity. In their most corrupted or least developed form they indicate capacity for appropriating and assimilating the regenerating truths of our religion. For example, the savage's concept of himself as double is either a lingering trace in his nature of the truth of the existence of the soul which has been imprinted upon the constitution of all men, or it is a prophetic feeling after it. His confession that he is not sufficient to preserve or keep alive his own soul, and his endeavour to find an external security for it, suggest surely our own daily confession, and also the blessed sacrament, through which in infancy, our life was committed to the protection and worship of the Holy Trinity. It seems almost blasphemous to associate his coarse and childish superstition with our sublime belief in spiritual oneness with Christ, with whom in God "our life is hid."¹ And yet St. Paul might have employed it to teach the savage to trust for salvation in One whom he knew to be able "to keep the deposit which he had committed to His care."² Then, the savage's belief in the unity of all the members of his clan with one another and with the god is an "unconscious prophecy," though monstrously expressed,

¹ Coloss. iii. 3.

² 2 Timothy i. 12.

of one of the first truths proclaimed in our Bible, and which lies at the root and is the inspiration of Christianity. It proves that the consecration of kinship is one of those thoughts which live imperishable even in sections of humanity so degraded that the family, man's oldest and most divine institution, does not seem to exist among them. It was not in his private capacity, but as one of the clan, that he was admitted to the feast of the god, and by the act of partaking he bound himself by the closest obligations of brotherhood to every member of it. Christianity is the only religion which aims at the consecration of the family and the sanctification of the community. The worship of God as our heavenly Father involves confession that we have all men for our brethren, and therefore that "no man liveth unto himself." Christianity certainly is far from having realised its ideal—the universal kinship of men in communion with Christ—but it alone of all religions has the potential promise of ultimate success, for the essential nexus between humanity and the Creator is revealed in its Author even "Christ who is our life,"¹ who came that through His death "we might have life, and have it more abundantly."²

So, as we contemplate those dreadful sacraments in flesh and blood, those horrible sacrifices performed with mingled lamentation and rejoicing—lamentation over a kinsman who had died for his kin, and subsequent rejoicing for life renewed in them through his

¹ Coloss. iii. 4.

² John x. 10.

death—can we help thinking of the Divine reality on which our faith is based. The truth of God dying for men in order to give to them eternal life is foreshadowed in forms most materialistic and monstrous, far removed from the moral and spiritual ideas which the Christian dogma of the Divine sacrifice derives from a profound sense of human sinfulness and Divine holiness. Let it be remembered that the Divine reality never entered the mind of any man, even the purest and loftiest to conceive. The purest symbolism of Levitical sacrifice no more resembles the reality of which it was appointed a type, than the savage's attempted picture or model resembles the man whom he seeks to portray. In regard to symbolism it is only by degree that the highest differs from the lowest. And if the Jew was trained by his symbolic religion to receive the reality which fulfilled it, in the savage in like manner has been preserved the capacity to recognise and embrace the truth which abolishes his revolting rites. A savage could recognise in a statue sculptured by Phidias the ideal which his own undeveloped imagination and skill were too rude and poor to suggest. So when the revelation of Christ, who gave Himself for a race He was not ashamed to call His brethren, dawns upon his soul, the savage will at once spring up from his debased and debasing zoolatry to adore Him as the God of his salvation.

The customs which thus far we have been considering are those of peoples without a history, for history implies a past, and into the past of the savage we cannot

penetrate. When discovered in his native haunts he is found to be just what he must have been for many previous ages. For how long he has come and gone "counting the winters by the moons and the sleeps, hunting or hunted, feasting or fasting,"¹ we can only speculate. Living like the beasts and the birds in respect of lack of restraint, he has to submit to their unprogressiveness; for he scoops out his cave, and builds his wigwam precisely as the birds have woven their nests, and the beasts have dug their dens since their creation. Where law in our sense of the word is unknown, real freedom and advance are impossible. So the savage wherever and whenever he is discovered confronts us as a creature who has only a present; for alas, judging from the corrosive and destructive effect of our civilisation upon him, we cannot predict for him much of a future. The savage, however, is not the type of heathenism, he represents its residuum or degradation. Above his condition there is an ascending series, in which through barbarism and the rude beginnings of culture, we reach a high degree of civilisation. And, as throwing important light upon the relations subsisting between the sacrificial rites of savagery and those of the highest heathen religions, what has been preserved to us of the sacred customs of the Aborigines of America, especially of those who attained to the civilisation represented by Mexico and Peru, will be found worthy of study.

Before the advent of the Europeans the vast continents of North and South America were densely

¹ Bancroft, *Nat. Races*, vol. i. p. 155.

inhabited by many types of humanity, reflecting on their lowest extreme—in the Shoshone cave-dwellers—modes of life almost brutal. Only one of the many varieties among them, the Eskimo, has been clearly identified with any people in the old world, though several tribes of them buried their dead with suttee rites similar to those practised among the ancient Aryans. The great majority of them are grouped under the designation Red Skins, and their condition is described as savage or barbarous. One stock of them, however, quite distinct from either Red Skins or Eskimo, attained in Central America a degree of civilisation which might have instructed Europe of that era. The birthplace of this people was believed by themselves to be the Isthmus; their oldest ruins are found at Palenque, and the centre of their widest influence was Yucatan. There, cut off from the world by the sea, and by the profoundest savagery around them, they prospered in a rich maize growing land. Migrating northward, and eventually surging southward again, they made for themselves a kind of history, divided into the Toltec, Chichemec, and latterly the Aztec period, in which the Spaniards invaded them. It is said that the Aztec period represented deterioration and relapse from the higher civilisation attained by the Toltecs several centuries before, but what was its origin, and what were the successive stages in its development there is little hope of discovering at a date so remote from even their own traditionally historic epoch.¹

¹ Bancroft, *Nat. Races*, vol. i. pp. 42, 126; ii. p. 84 *seq.*; iii. 310.

The discovery of this people was sudden, and the wonder occasioned by it was very great, but alas, over the rising of this strange world, the eclipse fell very speedily. Mexico and Peru simply withered away under the touch of their rapacious invaders, and yet the condition of things which met the gaze of the destroyers lasted sufficiently long for them to depict it. The Mexicans had no written records, but only some rude paintings and hieroglyphs; and the only chronicles found among the Peruvians were tallies or thongs, with a peculiar system of knots. In the narratives of the Spaniards we have only traditions of these peoples, and yet, as the customs and ceremonies which they described were actually observed by them, we learn from them something concerning ancient religion which we would not have known so well had we only the monuments and literatures of the Old World to examine. There, in the sixteenth century of our era, were actually witnessed phases of nature worship which Asia and Egypt and Europe of the historic period had long outgrown. In the Old World, nations, on account of their proximity and mutual relations, corrected each other's extravagances, supplemented each other's defects, and helped each other's progress. The more monstrous manifestations of physiolatry which at one period were common to all of them were sooner or later modified so as to survive only in symbol. In the Americas there was no such check and no such stimulus. There was no civilisation around the Mexicans to compete with them. If their own had a higher and better past, then, as in the

case of the Aryans in their descent into India, the memory of it did not suffice to check deterioration through contact with only inferior tribes. In any case, we have in the Aztec religion the reality of nature worship when left untrammelled and uninfluenced by any higher cult.

In Mexico the Spaniards were confronted with polytheism, not in the higher forms which it assumed in the historic periods of the Old World, but in the lower phases reflected in survivals of the prehistoric ages. The polytheism of the Aztec was superior to the animism of the savage, for it was the worship not of individual physical objects, but of the most general and imposing physical phenomena. No particular animal or tree was conceived of as divine, but the life of nature in general, which seemed to have annually a birth and death and resurrection, was so regarded. Particular elements like the wind and the rain, particular objects like the sun, which had power over earth to fertilise it, over the animals to make them multiply, and over men themselves to further or hinder their happiness, were addressed and worshipped as dominant deities. In this stage of religious thought "there is a general tendency to clothe all such abstractions in concrete forms, and that generally in the form of the thinker."¹ Yet though the conception of the god is not zoomorphic like that of the savage, but anthropomorphic, his essential character remains unaffected, so that, though conceived of in the form of a man,

¹ Reville, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1885, pp. 40, 248.

he is no more judged according to the standard of man than is the capricious power of nature which he personifies. Where men personify and deify the natural forces by which they are surrounded, their creations, though superior to themselves as regards longevity and power, are inferior to them in character, and quite upon a level with them in respect of predilections and dislikes. In regard to appetites and inclinations, these gods are supposed to conform closely to their worshippers. They are therefore addressed by them in epithets of praise and compliment, and they are honoured with such gifts as are acceptable to themselves or are required for their own maintenance. So since the pleasure of eating choice food takes foremost rank in the estimation of uneducated humanity, it was natural that food and drink oblations should be so frequent and important in polytheistic rites.¹ And in like manner, considering the strength of the sexual appetite, we need not wonder at the almost universal dedication of women to the gods, reserved alive for "brides of the sun," as in Peru, or as in Mexico sent regularly to them by immolation.

Such sacrifices may be described as ordinary or honorific; the extraordinary or piacular sacrifices of polytheism are clearly related to those of animism. In polytheism certain animals which could not be eaten for food, or even used upon ordinary occasions to furnish the table of the god, were upon certain occasions sacrificed to particular gods, and partaken of by

¹ Monier Williams, *Religious Life and Thought in India*, p. 6.

the sacrificers. Each god had a favourite animal dedicated to him, and he was often designated by an epithet indicating his predilection for it.¹ These epithets, such as "goat eater," "dog eater," "cannibal," and the symbols of sacred animals found associated with particular gods, are supposed to indicate something more than the belief that the special animal was an acceptable victim. The favourite bird or beast is alleged to correspond to the stage in which the god was believed to be incorporate in that bird or beast. It is sacrificed to him in polytheism, but in animism he, in the form of that creature, is sacrificed himself, not in spite, but because of his divinity, to the end that his tribal kin might continue vigorous, and that nature might be maintained perennially in her productive power.²

Here perhaps we discover the origin of human sacrifice which has left horrid traces of itself in the most cultured forms of polytheism. Wherever the spirit of vegetation has been personified and deified we may be prepared to find human sacrifices offered to it. Of the sacredness of life in general, and of human life in particular, savage and barbarous peoples have not our estimate. A man is protected simply because he is a kinsman; if he is a stranger his life will be of far less account than that of some animal. In the rudest stages of polytheism human victims were regularly slaughtered to promote the growth and ripening of the

¹ Döllinger's *Heidenthum und Judenthum*, p. 530.

² Hera, designated as αἰγοφάγος at Sparta, Pausanias, iii. 15, 9;

Apollo, ὄψοφάγος at Elis, Athenæus, 346; Artemis, καπροφάγος in Samos. See *Golden Bough*, i. 328-9 note.

crops. Conceiving of the life of the maize as that of a person passing through the whole course of existence between seedtime and harvest, the Mexicans sacrificed newborn babes when it was sown, children when it sprouted, youths when it eared, and old men when it was fully ripe. In Egypt, in very ancient times, red-haired men, representing the red ripening grain, were burned in harvest, and their ashes were scattered with winnowing fans over the fields. Indeed, from all parts of the barbarous world evidence in abundance could be cited that human victims were thus periodically sacrificed to the spirit of the crop in order to secure its fertility.¹

In some of these instances the ritual is significant of an intention other than that of sacrificing *to* the spirit of vegetation. As late as 1837 the Pawnees, following a very ancient and uninterrupted custom, were found sacrificing a Sioux girl who had been most carefully tended for months, and kept in ignorance of her doom. On the fatal day, after being gaily attired, she was conducted by the chief round the villages, and presented with a gift from each wigwam. Then, after being tortured by roasting over a fire, she was shot by many arrows. Her heart was torn out and eaten, and her warm flesh, cut in small pieces from the bones, was taken in baskets to the corn gardens, where the blood was squeezed out of them over the mounds in which the grain was being planted. A similar sacrifice of a

¹ Bastian, *Culterländerdes alten Amerika*, ii. 639; De Leon's *Travels*, translated by Markham, Hakluyt Society, 1864, p. 203.

young man in the fields at seedtime, designated "the boiling of the corn," prevailed in South Africa; while in India the Khonds are described as having offered to the earth goddess by even crueller rites a youth who had previously been most delicately nourished and treated with reverence. In all these cases the treatment of the victims previous to the sacrifice, the homage paid to them, the blessing expected from them as they were being carried to their torture, and the intrinsic power which their flesh and blood was believed to exercise directly over the growth of the crops, indicate that they were sacrificed because they were believed to be in a peculiar sense divine. There was manifestly a confusion of the victim with the god, and the sacrifice was theanthropic in the thought of the sacrificer.¹

For human sacrifice another origin must be sought than in the cannibalism of the worshipper. It was offered periodically, and in some cases constantly, by some nations to whom cannibalism was an abomination, and by others who were neither savage in their habits nor cruel in their character. The Mexicans were full of tenderness and consideration for the poor, the sick, and the aged, for whose benefit they maintained asylums. During the horrors of famine, when their capital was besieged, though the streets were found by their conquerors literally strewn with corpses, not a token was discovered that the Mexicans in their

¹ Schoolcraft, *Personal Memoirs*, p. 614; James, *Expedition to the Rocky Mountains*, ii. p. 80; Arbousset, *Tour to the N.E. of the*

Cape, p. 58; Campbell, *Wild Tribes of Khondistan*, p. 112; Macpherson, *Memorials of Service in India*, p. 113 seq.

terrible straits had resorted to human flesh for their sustenance. And yet, not only was human sacrifice among them simply frightful in its amount, but they were also in religion cannibals. Upon solemn occasions unless they partook of the flesh of the victim, the sacrifice would have been considered incomplete. The prevalence among them of the horrid custom must therefore have been due to the belief in its peculiarly sacramental efficacy. They sacrificed and partook of the human victim with the same intention which made the savage seek communion in the flesh and blood of his sacred animal for the renewal of his own life, or for the revival of the life of nature.¹

There is a wide gap between human sacrifice offered in this belief and for this purpose, and such sacrifices as are described in the *Iliad* and *Æneid* as offered to propitiate offended gods. In the phase of humanity reflected in the epics of Homer and Virgil, man's estimate of himself is very considerably superior to that of the savage, and he manifests a stronger sense of responsibility. His religious ideas have been so affected by his moral development that he will only resort to human sacrifice upon solemn and critical occasions. In all serious emergencies man is regarded as the proper victim, for he is the most precious gift the sacrificer can offer, being one in whom he may be said to give himself. In this gap—and it is a wide one—the Mexican religion is found as a specimen of polytheism

¹ Helps, *Spanish Conquest in Conquest of Mexico*, ii. p. 278
America, ii. p. 522; Prescott, *seq.*

superior to, yet having much in common with, the animism of savages. Its axiom that human sacrifices alone were efficacious was not founded upon the belief that man was man's dearest offering, but upon the belief that the offering was in a sense divine. The gods were not conceived of as in the likeness of the beast, they were regarded as so superior to man that magnificent altars were required for their worship, and a vast and complicated hierarchy was maintained for serving at them. The animistic confusion of victim with god, however, still continued, for these were regarded as co-substantial, so that the worshipper in assimilating part of his sacrifice believed that he was uniting himself with the god.

The Mexican victims were thus supposed to be incarnations of the gods, or rather by the peculiar treatment and reverence accorded to them for a year previous to the sacrifice they were transubstantiated into them. They were selected from the bravest and handsomest captives, they were clothed in raiment similar to that with which the idol was decked, and not only were they delicately nurtured, they were even venerated and worshipped. In great sacrifices the fatal day was chosen by themselves, on the understanding that the longer it was delayed the less would they find favour in the abode of the gods. When at last it came, they were taken to the summit of the pyramid, which served more for altar than temple, and fixed not upon the sacrificial stone, as were the victims in ordinary sacrifices, but upon the strong shoulders of a priest.

With one sharp stroke of the obsidian knife, the slaughterer laid open the breast, tore out the quivering heart as the epitome of the victim, threw it into the "eagle's cup," a vessel filled with burning resin before the idol statue, and then the still living body was cast down to be devoured at the great altar's base by the very worshippers who had just left off adoring him. All through the great festivals of their sacred year, this ceremony with only a variation of horrors was observed. The victims were sometimes slaughtered in multitudes, and they often consisted of beautiful women and tender little children. At times they were tortured with an ingenuity of cruelty beyond all that a Redskin could inflict, but they were always up to the fatal moment revered as if they were divine. For one sacrifice the victim was called "the wise lord of heaven," and in not a few of them, in consequence of the same belief, the victims were flayed and the priests clothed themselves or the idol with their skins.¹ The motive in all

¹ Sahagun, *Hist. de Nuev. Esp.*, book ii. ch. 21; Torquemada, *Monarquia Indiana*, vol. i. book i.; Diego Daran, *Hist. of the Indians of New Spain*, vol. i. ch. xx.; Bancroft, *Nat. Races of the Pacific*, vol. iii. pp. 297 seq., 354 seq.; Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*, vol. i. p. 65 seq.

Though the male victims were always captives taken in war, it was considered a point of honour thus to suffer. It was held more desirable to be sacrificed on the altar than to be slain in battle,

for it secured a speedy passage into the society of the gods. As indicating the estimation in which a sacrificial death was held, self-immolation was not unfrequent. The devotee was ushered into a vault filled with the corpses of those who had preceded him, and there he was left to die, offering his body in living sacrifice to please the gods he hoped thereby to join. —Desiré Charnay, *Ancient Cities of the New World*, pp. 63, 66; Stephens, *Travels in Central America*; *Travels in Yucatan*.

these atrocities, even when the most exquisite tortures were rigorously prescribed in the ritual, was not a cruel one. It was to secure union with the god in the life of the theanthropic victim. The torture was due to the belief of the savage that he profited by the bravery with which his captive endured it. Suffering courageously borne by the immolated indicated spirit, and it was the best of the victim which the worshipper sought to appropriate. The point, however, to be kept in view is the conception which inspired the whole system of Mexican sacrifice, that the victim was more than human. The modifications traceable in some of them even more clearly exhibit this belief. For example, in the spring sacrifice to Quetzalcoatl an image of the idol and equal to it in size, made of edible plants and honey, was sacrificed and divided among the worshippers, to be eaten by them. A similar ceremonial marked the early autumn festival of Uitzilopochtli, and it was even more prominent in the great festival of Tezcatlipoca at the winter solstice. Upon this occasion the function was inaugurated by numerous purifications, blood-lettings, and penances of the worshippers, and also by much burning of incense and by many sacrifices of fowls and of human victims by the priests. At its climax the priest shot an arrow at an image of the idol, which had been composed of various seeds of the earth, kneaded with the blood of sacrificed children. The heart was immediately cut out and eaten by the king—the god's vicegerent on earth—and the body was quartered for each division of the city, and so subdivided that as many as possible

might personally participate in the sacrament of Teo-quatl, "the god who is eaten." It was just the old savage rite, though in another form. The god was sacrificed that he might impart himself to the worshippers and gain a new resurrection for nature. In seed and blood he gave his body to be eaten by his people at the season when nature was apparently dying, in order that his life, which, though taken, was not extinguished, might be secured in another and stronger manifestation on the return of spring.¹

It seems strange that while the sacrificial rites of the Mexicans were so revolting, their religion on its practical side should have been considerably influenced by moral ideas. Its supreme god "Teotl," the sun, of which Tezcatlipoca in winter, Quetzalcoatl in spring, Uitzilopochtli in summer were manifestations—supreme in a polytheistic sense—was revered as the austere guardian of law and equity, and as god of providence to whom prayers were addressed in times of strait and peril. His favour was also entreated for governors when they were appointed that they might rule well, and that they might be removed should they ever abuse their power. Walking invisibly abroad everywhere among the people, he was supposed to be fully conversant with all that was going on in the world, and to be swift in movement and strong in power to punish wrong. His priests had authority to receive confessions, appoint penances, and grant absolution for offences repented of. The Mexicans thus evidently believed that righteousness in public

¹ Bancroft, *Nat. Races*, iii. p. 312 *seq.*

and virtue in private life were required to secure the favour of the gods. Indeed, if Sahagun, one of their first missionaries and greatest friends, is to be credited, they expressed their religion in prayers, confessions, thanksgivings, and pious exhortations almost biblical in character. It is generally agreed, however, that consciously or without connivance, a considerable amount of adaptation to Christian conceptions has coloured and even shaped his narratives. He read the originals through Christian spectacles, and translated them into what he thought they ought to be. His formulas of confession and absolution, suggesting parallels to the sublime contents of the Hebrew psalms and prophecies, could not possibly consist with religious ceremonies and social habits that were simply horrible and disgusting.¹ For the essential characteristic of the religion was that of a low physical cult, and its creed, even as described by the Spanish fathers, appears to have been unworthy of being called a system. It was a conglomerate of confused fragments of many diverse superstitions, the result of alliance with or conquest of many different peoples. The sun, though dominant in it, was never regarded in Mexican polytheism as it was latterly in the polytheism of Europe or Asia. Mexican theology at its highest may seem to touch the Zeus of the Homeric or Hesiodic mythology, but to the Platonic conception of "*θεος*," the conception expressed

¹ For some of these banquets a slave was killed, and the flesh elaborately dressed was served

with delicate sauce and seasoning. —Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*, vol. i. p. 130.

by "Teotl," which it very slightly resembles in pronunciation, it did not even approach.¹

The civilisation of Peru, which, as far as it can be traced, arose also perfectly independent of foreign influence, was so inspired by another solar religion as hardly to be conceivable without it. Under more favourable conditions, though probably ignorant of each other's existence,² the Peruvians simultaneously developed what the Mexicans never attained to—a great and well consolidated empire. It was dominated by the most complete theocracy which the world has ever seen; for the power of the divine Inca, like that of the sun, his divine father, penetrated in surveillance and administration the poorest home, and was felt by the humblest individual in the land. This most searching of despotisms was humanely exercised by a succession of Incas in the interest of their subjects, with the result of securing for them a marvellous degree of material prosperity. While resembling Mexican civilisation in its extent and height, the Peruvian differed widely from it in its nature and aims. The Mexicans sought to enlarge and secure dominion by military force, signalling every victory by the sacrifice of thousands, and by crushing the survivors into vassalage. The Peruvian wars, on the other hand, were all religious, undertaken to reduce neighbouring tribes into obedience to the

¹ Kingsborough, *Mexican Antiquities*, vol. v. pp. 132 seq., 144 seq.; Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. ii. p. 311; Bancroft, *Native*

Races, vol. iii. pp. 220, 237 seq.

² Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Peru*, vol. i. p. 152.

sovereignty of the sun ; and once the vanquished loyally submitted and conformed to their faith and their laws, they were watched with paternal solicitude. Between the characteristic features of the two religions there was very little resemblance, for the rites of the Incas were pure and simple compared with the revolting cannibal orgies which always outraged humanity in the Mexican ceremonies.¹

Though based upon zoolatry, for several animals were venerated as divine, or as divinely connected, and although fetish figures of wood and stone, always ugly and grotesque, were supposed to embody spirits, and to guard every tribe and every town, the worship of the Incas appears in some points to have touched that of the ancient Aryans. The sun, whose light was the life of men, was sovereign lord of heaven and earth. As derived from him, the worship of the elements, specially of fire, held a prominent place in its complicated system. The symbols of fire, as in India, were stones believed to be indwelt by it, seeing it could be struck out from them, while the nuggets of gold found everywhere in the sides of the mountains, were called "the tears of the sun." Peruvian differed from old Aryan worship in respect that the sacred hearth was not in the home but in the Temple of the Sun, who, unlike Agni, had his idol in a human face raying forth from a golden disk beams of burning splendour. In the worship of the sun the belief prevailed, as in ancient Iran, that fire became polluted, or lost its efficacy, by too long contact with man ; and

¹ Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Peru*, i. pp. 39 seq., 108 seq. :

Humboldt, *Travels*, pp. 108, 294 ;
Reville, *Hibbert Lecture*, p. 153 seq.

so it had to be renewed every year by a miracle wrought by the chief priest, who cleverly caught it from the sun in a concave mirror, or who, if the day was cloudy and the weather unfavourable, was always able to produce it by friction of the fire sticks.

The worship of Inti, the sun, consisted of offerings of flowers, fruits, vegetables, perfumes, and libations in golden cups, part of which was always sprinkled toward the sun. Bloody sacrifices were represented at the capital by the daily offering of a llama, and of small birds and conies. Before setting out on a war-like expedition, a black llama which had previously been kept starving—that the heart of the foe might faint in his fainting—was sacrificed ; and to secure the good health of the Inca, black dogs had frequently to yield up their lives. All the portions of the sacrifices which were devoted to the gods were consumed by fire for transmission to their ethereal abodes ; and as the offerings were generally of edible materials, the intention of the offerer was manifestly to feed or to please the gods. The eyes of the victim were turned towards the sun, and its blood, after slaughter, was smeared on the idol and the door of his temple ; and what of the carcase was not offered to the idol by burning, was divided among the worshippers and eaten raw. It presented thus very strong resemblances and affinities to the savage rites, though inspired by purer and higher ideas. The custom of human sacrifice, though not encouraged but rather restrained by the Incas, had even under them its place in the ritual. When an Inca was

ill, one of his sons was offered up to the sun as his substitute. At certain festivals an infant was immolated; and when a new Inca was enthroned, children were sacrificed to the powers of the under world. Wives, especially queens, had to be buried alive on the death of their husbands; for, though the sacrifice was not compulsory, public opinion was too severe and pronounced for any faithful widow to escape her fate. As civilisation, however, advanced, the custom in Peru, as everywhere else, appears to have been modified, and little statues of human beings still found in the graves of the dead became the substitute of the living victims formerly buried with them.

The sacred year was of course regulated by the sun, and every month had its appropriate festivals, while four more solemn ones commemorated the great periods of the sun's progress. At one of these the land was purged from its evils, but by rites far less savage than those already described. Blood of sacrifice was, indeed, required for them, but it was the blood of an animal victim, or it was drawn from the veins of children who were not slain. It was mixed with flour, so as to produce cakes, which were solemnly eaten by the people, who, before doing so, rubbed with them their own bodies and the doors of their houses. At sundown the Inca, clad in precious armour and followed by four relatives with lance in hand, traversed the city at full speed, amid the cheers of the people. Surrendering their lances at its outskirts to others, who continued the charge upon the retreating hosts of evils, the chase was

maintained by successive changes of pursuers till the limits of the ancient state of Cuzeo were reached. There the lances were fixed in the ground as talismanic securities against the return of the troubles that vexed them. At the harvest festival an idol constructed of grain was first adored and then partaken of, and a number of sacrificial rites were performed at home by each householder. At the festival of Power, when the god of thunder was worshipped, the young Incas and nobles, after severe testing by fasting and exercise, were invested with the insignia of manhood; and by partaking with him of the sacred bread which had been prepared by the Peruvian vestals or brides of the sun, they were received into indissoluble union with him.¹

The most magnificent of all their festivals, to which from all quarters the Peruvian nobles flocked, was that of Rayana, the annual imperial celebration of the sun's return. Of nine days devoted to its observance, three were spent in preparatory fasting. On the great day the function began at dawn, when the Inca in royal procession went forth to greet the sun with song and dance, adoring it the moment it appeared by flinging fervent kisses toward it. The Inca then presented from a huge golden vase, a libation of maize and maguey, which, after tasting himself, he dispensed among his royal kindred. Proceeding to the great temple, into which he and his suite alone were admitted, they spent a little time in worship. Then the black llama, or upon rare

¹ Markham, *Rites and Laws of the Incas*; Marmontel, *Les Incas*, vol. i. chaps. i.-iv.

occasions—such as a coronation, a royal birth, or a great victory—a child or beautiful maiden was sacrificed. From the entrails of the sacrifice the priest professed to read the augury of the coming year. The sacred fire was then rekindled, and by it burnt offerings were consumed. Thereafter a vast number of llamas from “the flocks of the sun”—that is, flocks fed at the public expense—were slaughtered and distributed to the people as the banquet of Inti. The sacred cake, prepared by the nuns, the brides of the sun, was thus also placed upon the board. Then followed another libation, after which the cake was distributed, and on this occasion the Inca communicated with not only his suite, but with the whole body of the worshippers, and the protracted ceremonial of the day ended in the dancing and revelry which gave the festival its name.¹

The coincidence of this distribution of consecrated bread and maize among the worshippers in this great ceremony with the Holy Sacrament of the Church, very powerfully impressed and astonished the Spanish missionaries. They were also sorely exercised by some striking resemblances to the sacrament of baptism, and to other Christian ordinances, which they found in the Peruvian religious institutions. It seemed to them that this caricature of their divine faith had been devised by the devil for the deluding of the heathen. Soon after birth, for example, every child was introduced into the community by immersion in water, to exorcise any malign influences to which he was sup-

¹ Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Peru*, vol. i. p. 100 seq.

posed to be subject, and to defend him against evil spirits. A name was also given to him in this ceremony, but it was regarded as only provisional ; for his definitive name was bestowed when, at the age of ten or twelve, he was confirmed, and commended to his guardian spirit by the oblation of his hair and of the parings of his nails to the sun. In order to be continued ever after in the enjoyment of the rights of citizenship, he was required to make regular confession to the priest, and to receive his absolution. The peculiar sanctity attached to virginity, and the responsibilities and immunities with which the Peruvian nuns were invested, also surprised and puzzled the missionaries. The analogies, however, were only external, for the intention of the Peruvian rites was directly opposed to that of the Christian ordinances, and, indeed, they could hardly be said to have any religious significance in the proper sense of the word. They were not means of grace, ordinances to be observed for the saving of the soul, but just so many legislative provisions, designed to bring every home and every private person within the net of imperial administration. The chief end and aim of the whole Peruvian ceremonial was not to promote any moral purpose, but to consolidate and rivet the governing power of the Inca upon every individual in the state. Blasphemy against the sun, malediction of or rebellion against "his child," yea, any violation of the law, was branded as sacrilege, and was miserably punished by death. For all law emanated from the Inca, who was divine, not in virtue of his office

and royal commission, but in respect of his nature. So the priest was more a policeman than a minister of religion, and in "receiving confession and granting absolution, he was exercising on behalf of the state for political ends the very same function which the officers of the Inquisition exercised in the interests of the Church."

Though the resemblances were only external and were essentially opposed to the verities which inspired the ordinances of the Christian religion, they were naturally most confounding to intruders, who, Christian only in name, were really as besotted in superstition as the pagans whom they so easily crushed. We can only speculate now what would have been the fate of these religions had Christianity been presented to the Mexican and the Peruvian as it was first presented in the person and teaching of St. Paul by the polytheists of Western Asia. There was indeed a vast deal to cleanse out from the temple of religion, yea, nearly the whole edifice had to be pulled down, but St. Paul would have found in the foundations solid materials to be used in rearing "the habitation of God through the Spirit."¹ He who could adapt himself—though not his gospel—to the Lycaonians, who would have worshipped him as a god,² and to the Athenians,³ whose own poet he quoted, would surely have addressed some sympathetic entreaty even to Mexicans, to turn from their horrible sacrifices to the true sacrifice by which was divinely secured to them participation in the Divine life. He would as surely have earnestly invited the Peruvians to

¹ Ephesians ii. 22.

² Acts xiv. 11.

³ Acts xvii. 28.

forsake their sacrament for the true sacrament of communion with the Sun of Righteousness, in which the least of "the children of light"¹ are equal with the greatest in the only royal priesthood in the spiritual universe. The Peruvians were nearer the truth than the Mexicans in that instead of laying hold of the gods and sacrificing them for their own advantage, they offered their human sacrifices as substitutes for themselves to the gods, with some feeling of their dependence upon them and some gratitude for life and all its blessings. It is true that their gods were only prominent physical phenomena or forces, and that they had no suspicion that there was any divine personal power behind or above to control them ;² but such as they were, they

¹ 1 Thessalonians v. 5.

² Garcilaso has laboured hard to convince us that at least his royal ancestors the Incas were not nature worshippers like the people they governed, but monotheistic philosophers. It is from him that Prof. M. Müller in *Physical Religion*, pp. 183-4, gets his reference to the scepticism professed in high places in reference to the popular creed and religion. There may be nothing improbable in his traditions of individual unbelief in the general superstition, indeed it would be as natural in the unique civilisation of Peru, as it was among Romans in the times of Augustus, but his conclusion, though firmly and for long believed in, that the Incas attained to the

conception of a supreme Creator and Governor, has not stood the test of critical investigation. It is another of the many instances in which the interpreter translates his own conception into the original ; it is akin to the belief that behind all variety of manifestations the North American Indian worshipped "the Great Spirit." "In most instances," says Dr. Brinton (*Myths of the New World*, p. 52 *seq.*), "the phrase is of modern origin and has been put into the mouth of the Indians by missionaries, and applied only to the white man's God. Of monotheism, in the Semitic, or even the dim pantheistic sense of the Brahmin, there was not a single instance in the American continents."

were convinced that man could only reach and become one with them through sacrifice. Now in regard to all these things he would have felt warranted in saying to them, "Whom now ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you." And we feel certain that although his revelation that God had established communion with man through sacrifice would have surprised them as that which never entered the mind of man to conceive, it would not have confounded them. Apprehending man's essential religious instinct and apprehended by it, the Gospel would have borne fruit unto holiness in them, as it has done in all the world.

LECTURE III

SACRIFICE IN HIGHER POLYTHEISM

WE have to consider in this lecture the sacrificial rites of religions which are represented not by rude monumental relics, but by literatures which, already great in volume and rich in materials, are increasing yearly to the astonishment of Christendom from which they were long hidden. In them have been preserved the history, philosophy, and theology of peoples, some of whom like the Egyptians were enjoying, two thousand years before the birth of Moses, a material civilisation in many respects not inferior to that of Europe in the sixteenth century. In the case of none of them does their history reach back to the savage or barbarous beginning from which it is asserted they emerged. The earliest Egyptian monuments that have been discovered depict the same civilisation and religion as are portrayed on the latest. The most ancient Indian books represent a condition of society first patriarchal, then national, and monarchic. The origin of nations, like the origin of life, is indeed "as much a puzzle to our clearest science" as it was to bewildered thinkers several

thousand years ago. All that we know is that nations must have existed long anterior to their oldest documents and earliest monuments. Into the mystery of the past so represented, we are able to penetrate only a very little distance. But by carefully examining old customs, traditions, and the language in which they have been recorded, we get light sufficient to discover that civilisation preserves in it many witnesses of anterior barbarism. We know now that Yule, Beltane, and Lammas recall the festivals of a solar cult, and that in the mimic honours which we pay to Father Christmas and the Harvest Maiden, we are playfully commemorating sacrifices which may once have been offered in our land in terrible earnestness. If this be the case in Christendom, we may expect to find abundant vestiges of savagery in the beliefs and rites of heathendom. Indeed it is often only by means of such survivals that we are able to interpret and account for many peculiarities of heathen religion.

We must beware, however, of always regarding these resemblances as survivals of a savage stage of religion. They may be accretions which a purer form of religion incorporated in its decline. In none of these literatures, as far as they have been examined, is the history of religious thought described as always one of progress. The traditional belief very generally expressed in them is on the contrary that of declension from a purer primitive faith to lower ideas and grosser rites. It is averred upon good authority that the sublimer phases of the religion of Egypt, the purest and most delicate

notions of morality, are the most archaic.¹ The same observation applies to the ancient religions of China, India, and Persia, and the fact is highly significant; for it seems to indicate that "what is true and pure in religion is not evolved out of what is gross and false by a process of elimination, but rather proceeds from separate sources of thought." The pure has its spring in man's essential religion, the fundamental revelation given in human conscience; and the gross is the outcome of his mythology, that is of his fancies and reasonings concerning natural phenomena. The conclusion which is claimed to be legitimately drawn from an examination of the religion of Egypt, may yet be established in regard to all religions that have left a record of themselves; namely that the idea of monotheism, if not propounded, is suggested and implied from the first, while at the same time polytheism progresses without interruption. "Mythology, therefore, instead of having produced any forms of religion may have to be regarded as having early mixed with and corrupted every one of them."² If so, it furnishes a telling comment upon the testimony of St. Paul, whose theory of evolution appears to have been one not of ascent but of declension through polytheism into animism, through idolatry into zoolatry, through stages of belief in which "the glory of the uncorruptible God was changed into an image made like to corruptible

¹ Rougé, "Conférences sur la religion des anc. Égypt," *Annales de la philosophie chrétienne*, vol.

xx. p. 327.

² Renouf, *Hibbert Lecture*, 1879, pp. 92, 250.

man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.”¹

Great diversity of opinion prevails as to the antiquity of these sacred literatures, and still greater as to the relative antiquity of their several contents. This is notably the case in regard to the Vedas; “the bundles of fragments” representing the relics of the primitive Avesta; and the so-called Sacred Books of Chaldæa.² In the present state of our knowledge, therefore, we ought to be very chary of employing quotations from any of them in support of any theory as to the origin and growth of religious conceptions. The criticism which has been so long and so keenly directed upon

¹ Romans i. 23.

² Bergaigne, in *Religion Védique*, and Barth, in *Religions of India*, maintain that instead of reflecting a primitive condition of religion, the Vedas are the expressions of an advanced and highly differentiated system of thought. M. Müller, in *Physical Religion*, admits that the hymns in even the *Rig Veda* are not of equal antiquity, and shows how some ancient hymns have been modified to suit the exigencies of a much more developed ritual. The questions as to what hymns are old, and what old hymns have been subsequently modified are still being discussed. The primitive Avesta was supposed to consist of twenty-one books, and only one of these is believed to be

preserved entire. The parts of the original Avesta were said to be thirty in number, and yet only eighteen are extant. The portions which survive represent the relics of a liturgical collection, more a manual for the priests than a prayer-book for the people (Darmesteter, “Introd. to Zendavesta,” *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. iv. p. 30 *seq.*). In regard to the Chaldæan remains, the best scholars cannot tell what of them may be ancient and what of them may be late. “They have to build up a fabric out of broken and half-deciphered texts, out of stray allusions and obscure references, out of fragments of monuments, many of which are late and still more of uncertain date” (Sayce, *Hibbert Lecture*, 1887, pp. 4, 316).

the Bible must be applied to all these sacred books before their testimony can be accepted against it. Meanwhile, they are valuable as reflecting at a remote period in human history the religious conceptions of peoples separated by what would be then deemed impassable barriers of time and space. They originated independently, though eventually in some instances they may have influenced each other's development. The remarkable similarity in their fundamental ideas indicates that all over the world men will think the same solemn thoughts about religion and express them in similar rites and institutions. Even

“the differing forms
Of this diversity, are but the strands
Of the one cable anchored in the deeps
Of fathomless antiquity.”¹

We have not yet learned from them how to wind the scattered threads into the primal unity, or to use them as a clue to penetrate the mystery which enwraps the cradle of our race; but examination of any of them—just as we have them—or comparison of the best of them with the Bible just as we have it, will convince us, that man left to interpret for himself the primeval revelation given in his own constitution and in the material world around him, by the light of reason and experience only, will inevitably wander wildly from the truth. And yet the study of these books will instruct us that every honest endeavour of man to attain to truth marks a Divine discipline whereby the human

¹ Frederic Tennyson, *Daphne and other Poems*, p. 170.

race was prepared to appropriate the revelation of "the things of the Spirit of God, which the natural man of himself neither receives nor knows."¹

In all these literatures religion is presented upon a much higher level than any we have yet considered. The religious sentiment stimulated by the increasing wonders of nature is found in them to have developed consciousness of some greater being behind the many forms of its existence. Men may call that being by very different names — Tien, Dyaus, Ahura Mazda, Nutar Nutra—but they are endeavouring to syllable the same reality behind all phenomena, the one behind the many, the Theos behind the polytheoi of their formulated creed. In all of them sacrifice is set forth as an essential part of worship. The necessity for it is everywhere proclaimed even in cases where praise and prayer made by the heart are said to be more acceptable "than gifts of butter and honey, and offerings of oxen and cows."² Indeed it seems to have risen in the estimation of men, just as they gained in knowledge of themselves and of their surroundings. Reverence for the unknown Force felt to be behind all the manifestations of it in nature, and acknowledged to be beyond the control of men, incited their endeavour to secure its protection and goodwill. And yet though they felt dependence upon its hidden strength, and had to reckon with it at every step which they took, men did not in any of these religions express their dependence upon and confess

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 10-16.

² *Rig Ved.*, i. 109 ; viii. 24, 20.

their accountability to it as we do. Their religion was inspired not by self-abnegation, but by self-assertion. It was the religion of self-interest, observed because it was profitable. It was rooted in the belief that after all the invisible powers were as amenable as men are to persuasion and flattery, and that even when reluctant to oblige, they were as likely as men are to be constrained by the barter of sacrifices to bestow the coveted equivalent.

So, in all these religions, sacrifice confronts us, not as a means of grace, but a scheme for self-defence and self-advancement. The intention of the sacrificer was just that of the savage, though he expressed it in rites more refined, and sought to influence gods of a higher type.¹ The immense importance attached to it was due to belief in its intrinsic efficacy, not as an act of devotion, but as a magical performance. Upon the lips of the Babylonian priest was the power of the terrible "*sabba*" which even the gods must obey,² and the Brahman could manipulate sacrifice as a cosmic force sufficient "to make the sun rise and set, and the rivers run this way or that." Belief in the intrinsic efficacy of sacrifice dominates all forms of polytheism, even those of the higher type. By means of it man could not only procure all the blessings which constitute prosperity here and happiness hereafter, but also obtain power over other worlds than this, and over beings not

¹ Bergaigne, *La Relig. Ved.*, i. p. 123; Lang, *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, i. p. 225. ² Sayce, *Hibbert Lecture*, pp. 319, 335.

only visible but invisible. In India and Babylonia the gods were believed to have attained to heaven by sacrifice; and by it they were held to have called into being and still to have power to modify the existing order of things. Taken as a whole, sacrifice was conceived of as an organism to be created, in which every piece must grow into its proper place, and in which all the separate parts should harmonise so that nothing was defective and nothing was in excess. "It was an invisible and universal force, but like electricity it required an expert operator to elicit and utilise it."¹ If any part of the ritual was vitiated the whole sacrifice was lost, and since mistakes were unavoidable in a long and extremely complicated function, a particular priest was generally in attendance to make good any mistake of a propitiatory offering.

Belief in the efficacy of sacrifice as that to which all powers visible and invisible must give way, was thus intimately associated with belief in the mediatorial offices of the priest. In polytheism the priest and his rites take the place of the sorcerer and his medicine in animism. What is magic in the sorcerer is divination in the sacrificing priest. In all acts of worship his services were indispensable. He alone could indicate the kind of sacrifice required, perform its rites, and tell from the signs accompanying the offering whether it would be accepted or rejected. Naturally therefore in India, China, Assyria, and Egypt the priesthood became supreme in the state. The sovereign

¹ Haug, *Aitareya Brahmana*, i. p. 73 seq.

in several cases was pontifex maximus, discharging, like Solomon, for those whom he ruled many of the functions of the priest, but this always because he was the representative or descendant of the priesthood. Belief in the dogma of *opus operatum* was universal. The sacrifice was held to be effectual, not because of the value of the victim, but because it was performed by the proper functionaries in a perfect manner. Provided the rites were celebrated according to rule, the intention was of very little importance, while no matter how pure and earnest was the motive, the slightest mistake in reciting the formula, or the misplacing of a bit of wood, would spoil and render it useless. It is indeed true, that in China and Persia, much depended upon the motive and the spirit of reverence that prompted the sacrifice. The offering to be acceptable must in China express a real harmony of spirit between the worshipper and the worshipped; and in Persia good deeds, and words, and thoughts must be combined with it, for its efficacy was limited to the good. But even in cases where sacrifice could not be made a substitute for righteous disposition, ceremonial was considered essential. Piety and reverence culminated in the ritual, and instead of being lost in, they were nourished by it. In all of them sacrifice was a magical and potent spell, which only a priest could practise.¹

¹ The Li Ki, books xx. xxi. xxii. in *Sacred Books of the East*, vols. xxvii. and xxviii.; The

Yasts and Sîrôzahs in *Sacred Books of the East*, vols. xxiii. and xxxi.

In none of the higher religions, with the exception perhaps of that of Rome, in which the slaughter of men and animals for augury was carried to a frightful extent, was sacrifice marked by the ghastly rites which shocked the discoverers and destroyers of Mexico. In every one of them at one period or other human sacrifice did prevail, and in some of them it maintained its hold with incredible tenacity. It was a tribute freely rendered by the Greeks down to the time of Pausanias. In the Roman Empire it was only abolished in the reign of Hadrian by imperial edicts enforced by the severest penalties. It continued in the heathen regions of Europe till beyond the Middle Ages; it has only been suppressed in India of our day by the strong hand of British rule, and it is said to be reappearing in the Black Republic. Indeed, so closely is it connected with the essence of polytheistic religions, that it seems to vanish only with polytheism itself.¹

¹ Herod., lib. vii. 114, 197; Eusebius, *Præpar. Evangel.*, lib. iv. 16, 17; Plutarch, *Themist.*, 13; Pausanias, viii. 2; Grote, *Greece*, i. ch. vi.; Maurice, *Indian Antiq.*, pp. 965, 984; Mallet, *Northern Antiq.*, i. pp. 132-142; Jortin, *Eccles. Hist.*, v. p. 233.

In spite of the vigilance of the officials in every district of India, the tendency of the superstitious people and self-seeking priests towards forbidden rites is ever showing itself. The Government of the North-Western Provinces is at present investigating the circumstances under which a

human being has been offered in sacrifice to the black goddess, Kali, in a village near Benares, in the very heart of a dense population long under our rule. The village priests incited a Brahman family to give up their son, a boy of sixteen. Before a large crowd the lad was led forth to the temple, and after invocation to the hideous idol, the chief priest cut the victim's throat and sprinkled the warm blood over Kali herself. The crime is said to have created a sensation in the district.

The barbarity of hook-swing-

In religions where it is not actually exhibited, it is always plainly traceable in symbols and substitutes for it. In the Indian Books man is mentioned first among offerings that are acceptable, and the very period is indicated when animals took the place of human victims.¹ In Egypt a very impressive reminiscence of it was preserved in the fact that every animal found by the priests to be fit for sacrifice was certified by the Sphragistae with a seal bearing the image of a man whose arms were bound behind his back, and across whose throat a sword was drawn.² While, however, the custom was universal, reforms which abolished or left it behind are indicated in all religions. These were due to the gradual refining of the moral sentiment under the natural expansion of the human intellect. As civilisation advanced and society became more humane, the tendency grew in strength to consider that what excited disgust and horror in men should not be offered to the gods unless on peculiarly solemn and critical occasions. So the offerings came

ing has recently revived in several villages. It was put down by the police in 1867, up to which year it formed a part of every annual festival, and was often preceded by the ordeal of walking through the fire. In the latest case, which occurred within ten miles of Calcutta, a missionary stopped the orgie and examined the back of the drugged victim, when he found that the hook had passed through and lacerated the

two great muscles, although the man had been eased by the support of a waist-band also. The villagers resented his interference. — *The Scotsman*, 6th Sept. 1893.

¹ Wilson, *Rig Ved.*, i. 24, ii. 8; Haug, *Aitareya Brahmana*, i. 8, 9, and viii. 15, 16; vol. ii. pp. 90, 91, and 467.

² Wilkinson, *Ancient Egypt*, vol. iii. p. 407.

to be generally such animals as were valuable on account of the care expended upon rearing them, or the skill and danger involved in the endeavour to hunt and capture them. On certain occasions the victim was an animal supposed to be greatly affected by the god, while on others a peculiarly acceptable sacrifice was that of a creature abominable in itself, but supposed to be acceptable, because, as in Persia, by the slaughter its pollution was ended, or because, as in Egypt, the soul of a fellow-man who had been doomed by migration to expiate his wickedness in it, was liberated from his punishment.

In India, China, and Persia animal sacrifices were not practised with any great extravagance. They marked only the rites peculiar to the principal seasons and to the crowning festival of the sacred year. In almost all the sacrifices the suffering caused by the slaughterer was reduced to a minimum. The sacred knife was never regarded as an instrument of cruelty, for instead of wounding and slaying it was supposed to heal and give life to the victim. Torture in animal sacrifice was unknown, though in the case of human sacrifice in the solar cults of Asia and of Europe the torment of the hapless victim seems to have been as essential to the rites as it was to those of Mexico. Polytheism everywhere represents a conglomerate of pure beliefs and most degraded practices. In modern India we have a fair specimen of the religious condition of ancient Egypt, Assyria, and Greece. There and then, as to-day in India, the loftiest philosophical speculation was combined with grossest sensuality, and

basest orgiastic idolatry of the demons of destruction and lust. Yet however shameful and revolting was the spectacle to be witnessed at their shrines, slaughter of animals, unless on special and peculiar occasions, when hecatombs were deemed appropriate or necessary, was never excessive.¹

The reason of this will probably be found in two beliefs almost universal in polytheism. The belief in transmigration must have powerfully affected men's conceptions of their relation to the lower animals, and another belief, very prevalent in India and Egypt, that the Divine impersonal soul has infused itself into everything, must have gone far to make even the lowest creatures inviolable by the religious. Not only were the animals everywhere defended from violence, they were considered sacred and accounted as proper objects of worship. In Persia, the dog and the cow, though not worshipped, were regarded as very holy. Injury done to a dog was punished more severely than was the slaying of a man, and the most efficacious of all holy elements for religious purification was supposed to be the excrement of the cow.² Parallel beliefs as to the sanctity of certain animals were common among

¹ Wheeler, *Hist. of India*, i. p. 129 ; iii. pp. 218, 221 ; Johnson, *Oriental Relig.*, ii. p. 305 ; Syed Ameer Ali, *Spirit of Islam*, p. 8.

² In India every part of a cow is supposed to be inhabited by a god, every hair is inviolable, its dung plastered upon any place

cleanses from pollution, while the ashes of burnt cow-dung sprinkled upon a sinner will convert him into a saint.—Monier Williams, *Religious Thought in India*, p. 318 ; Darmesteter, Introduction to the Vendidad, p. xcvi., *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. iv.

Greeks and Romans, though only in India and Egypt was the belief in their divinity acknowledged. In these cases the superstition was probably rooted in the totemism of prehistoric ages, but educated Egyptians of the latest ages defended it as the consequence of their belief in the all-pervading creative energy of the hidden Nutar Nutra, the god who was in everything and in whom everything moved.¹ In India it produced the latest development of Hindooism, Vaishnavism—devotion to a personal god who has shown his sympathy with mortals, and his activity for the welfare of all living things, by his frequent avatars in forms ranging from those of the reptile and the fish, up to those of Krishna and Buddha—and who will yet, like the coming redeemer of every religion, in a final avatar, appear for the uprooting of evil.² We can readily understand how such beliefs must have greatly fostered tender respect for all forms of animal life. And although in one aspect it is childish and degrading, in another it may remind us, as Michelet has observed, that Christians have never “sufficiently emphasised their duties to that

¹ *Récords of the Past*, vol. ii. pp. 129, 132; Bunsen's *Egypt*, i. p. 364.

² In spite of its hideous idolatry Vaishnavism has more in common with Christianity than any other form of unchristian faith, for the simple reason that it has borrowed from it. In its devotion to a personal god it is said to satisfy the yearnings of the heart for a religion of faith and love,

but that faith and worship must not be understood in our sense of the words. The religion as exhibited in the Bhagavad-gita and the Bhakti Sutra is a religion of works, presenting in its use of rosaries and bodily exercises resemblances to the corrupt Christianity of the Middle Ages.—See Monier Williams, *Religious Thought in India*, pp. 97, 334.

immense caste which, beneath all human castes, that is the poor brute world, appeals to them to be delivered and lifted up.”¹ Though not accepting the conclusion which Mr. Lecky has drawn from a survey of a growth of consideration for animals as an element of public morals,² “that the Mohammedans and Brahmans have in this sphere considerably surpassed the Christians;” believing rather that recent legislation for the prevention of cruelty to animals³ was more urgently required in India than in Great Britain, we may yet thankfully accept this touching reminder from polytheism of our obligations as Christians to realise and cherish sympathy with nature in her humblest living forms.⁴

Another feature as remarkable as this reverence for animals, which may explain the economical employment of them in sacrifice, is the torture which in many religions the worshippers inflicted upon themselves. It was

¹ *The Bird*, p. 148; *Bible de l'humanité*, pp. 59, 75.

² *Hist. of European Morals, etc.*, vol. ii. p. 188.

³ Act xi., 1890, of the Legislative Council of India.

⁴ The case against Hindooism is fairly stated by Mr. John Lockwood Kipling in the introduction to his interesting volume on *Beast and Man in India, a Popular Sketch of Indian Animals in their Relation with the People*. Macmillan, 1891. Here is a sentence: “The Hindu worships the cow, and as a rule is reluctant to take the life of any animal except

in sacrifice. But that does not preserve the ox, the horse, and the ass from being unmercifully beaten, over-driven, over-laden, under-fed, and worked with sores under their harness; nor does it save them from abandonment to starvation when unfit for work, and to a lingering death which is made a long torture by birds of prey, whose beaks, powerless to kill outright, inflict undeserved torment. And the same code which exalts the Brahman and the cow, thrusts the dog, the ass, the buffalo, the pig, and the low-caste man beyond the pale of merciful regard.”—p. 4.

natural that the idea of the intrinsic or magical efficacy of sacrifice should react upon the importance attached to asceticism in all its manifestations. Men transferred to themselves the sufferings which they spared their victims. The sacrificial propensity, which they restrained in relation to the animals, they stimulated to almost unbounded license in self-mutilation and even in suicide. Belief in the supernatural efficacy of self-torture, prevalent in higher pagan religions, was widespread all over the savage world. The North American Indian in order to become a sorcerer, the Celt to become a seer, willingly submitted to austerities as appalling as Gotama endured to become a Buddha. The Mexican priests flagellated themselves, and the Syrian priests gashed themselves with knives from the conviction that such sufferings had an all-prevailing power with the gods. It is remarkable that, according to the Indian beliefs, the powers wielded by the arch-demons were acquired by the practice of religious austerities, so that where men employed them against evil powers they were availing themselves of their weapons. When endured for the higher end of attaining to illumination and equality with the gods, we must beware of attaching to those self-immolations any moral significance. The sufferers had no idea of the blessing which may accrue from suffering patiently endured; as Divinely appointed or sanctioned. The tragic poets of Greece, it is true, were deeply imbued with the feeling that great suffering so purifies and refines the noble, as to exalt them after death to the rank of gods; but the worth of

self-inflicted suffering in any religion "was not estimated in a spiritual but in a purely 'spiritualist' sense, and so considered it was great indeed."¹

The ends or objects which sacrifice in all these religions was supposed to promote or secure, varied according to the prevailing belief in Deity, and the prevailing estimate of life's highest good. In all pagan religions two forms of belief co-existed, an esoteric, as distinguished from the popular creed. Side by side with the grossest superstition and idolatry are found conceptions that are truly ethical and religious. The specimens of Babylonian hymns and Egyptian prayers which have been preserved, and which are now translated in the *Records of the Past*, suggest in depth of penitence and height of aspiration a comparison with the Hebrew psalter; yet these very prayers and hymns were employed in most degraded idolatrous worship. These contradictions and incongruities in heathen religion have hitherto defied reconciliation, but their existence is undeniable. While the masses everywhere craved for very concrete conceptions of the objects of their faith, and for very palpable methods of communicating with them, there was always a thoughtful class, represented by the priests as frequently as by the philosophers, who strove after a more impersonal religion, of which the popular beliefs and rites were only symbols. The unlearned multitude practised sacrifice

¹ Monier Williams, *Religious Thought in India*, p. 231; Spencer, *De Leg. Heb.*, ii. 13, 2; Selden, *De Diis Syriis*; Reville, *Hibbert Lecture*, p. 100; Æschylus, *Eumenides*, 737; Müller's *Dissertation on the Eumenides*, p. 197.

as the great preservative against malevolent demons, or as the sure means of obtaining from benevolent powers material benefits. The learned few, believing in sacrifice as some mysterious cosmic force, the great maintainer of the energies of the universe, sought by means of it to rise to actual and equal fellowship with the many gods above them, and in some cases to union with the Absolute Being from which they and all things sprang.

From the Brahmanas we gather that the whole intricate ceremonial in whose meshes an ordinary Hindoo was involved from before his birth till long after his death—as not his own but the property of the priests—was to pile up through their offices with him and for him such an amount of merit as would secure prosperity here, and make it safe for him to face the mystery hereafter. A thoughtful and philosophical Brahman again sought through all these services an escape from the inherited curse of transmigration, for by the last offering of himself, completed in the burning of his body on the funeral pyre, he was in the way of being finally absorbed into universal Brahm. The earliest religious rites, performed for or upon him—for they began before he saw the light—were intended to purify, and to prepare him for being regenerated through a second birth, marked by his investiture with the sacred cord. According to Manu,¹ the first birth of an Aryan was from the natural mother, a second occurred in the binding upon him of the holy thread, and even after that the

¹ Manu, ii. 169, in *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxv.

twice-born man could be regenerated through the initiation of a very solemn sacrifice. We need not dwell upon the elaborate system of oblations, which from the time when as a young householder he consecrated his own hearth, he had to render to the sacred fire daily ; at new and full moon ; at the beginning of the seasons ; and at the summer and winter solstices—on which latter occasions he presented with great solemnity his animal sacrifices. For the aim in all these ordinary rites—*smarta karman*—in the more important of which he was assisted by the priests, was to secure that his merits would considerably exceed his demerits in the reckoning of his responsibilities of each period.¹ We may refer, however, more fully to the most solemn ordinance of personal and domestic religion which, if he could afford it, he was expected to observe, the very ancient and solemn Soma sacrifice. For such *srauta*

¹ To the holy fire “*Agui-â-dhâna*” every householder for thirty years, or, according to some authorities, for all his life, had to offer daily the “*Agni hotra ishta*,” an oblation of rice, barley, milk, and ghee. At new and full moon he observed the “*Darsa purnamasana*” ceremonial, in which, if he could afford it, he was expected to invite the offices of four priests. These, with the proper sacrificial instruments, prominent among which was a sword to fend off the demons, elaborated in great detail the function with the result of procuring much merit to the

householder, and no small profit to themselves. Every four months he had to offer the “*Katur-masaya*” oblations, in memorial of the generative and productive powers of nature ; and at the summer and winter solstices there were special festivals on a grander scale, distinguished by the offering of animal victims.—*Satapatha Brahmana*, p. xlviii. ; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xi. ; also *Satapatha Brahmana*, Kand. i. ii. ; *Adhyaya*, v. ; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xii. pp. 52, 383 ; *Manu*, iv. 26 ; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxv.

karman, the simplest of which lasted five days—though some of them were protracted much longer—the services of at least sixteen priests and eleven sacrificers were required. The victims in early times consisted of various kinds of animals, including the horse, the animal mentioned next to man as most fit for sacrifice,¹ but latterly only goats came to be employed.² These were immolated by a priest, who had gold on his finger, for gold was supposed to confer life, so that the victim might not be injured but blessed by the sacrifice. Though actually strangled, it was described in the ritual as “quieted,” and that with the approval of its kin. The knife was invoked not to harm it, and when its eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, and other “openings of its vital airs,” had been cleansed by water sprinkled with a bunch of sacred grass, it was supposed to be revived, healed, and soothed, and to pass up through the fire as living. Only parts of it, however, were offered through the fire, the other portions were eaten by the priests, and its blood, contrary to almost universal usage, save that of Egypt,³ was poured out upon the ground, as the

¹ *Rig Ved.*, Mand, i. 162-3; *Ramayaana*, i. 13.

² Just as the horse became the substitute for man, the ox was substituted for the horse, and the sheep for the ox, till latterly the goat, in which animal the “*medha*,” the part fit for being sacrificed, remained longer than in other animals, came to be re-

garded as pre-eminently the proper victim.

³ There it was allowed to flow upon the ground, or over the altar if the victim was placed upon it. It was not regarded as *saerosanct*, for it seems to have been used in the kitchens for cooking.—Wilkinson, *Ancient Egypt*, vol. ii. p. 458.

portion of the evil spirits, and was trodden upon to drive them away.¹

These sacrifices, however, were only preparatory to the solemn libation and sacrament of the Soma. This plant—the Dionysus of India and Iran—the juice of which was the wine of the early Aryans, was supposed to possess the mystic power both of gladdening the gods, and of conferring enlightenment and immortality upon men. Soma was the king of all healing herbs, the “holy driver away of death,” who brought down with him from heaven all plants whose leaves or fruits are for the healing of the nations.² According to the Iranian belief, the earthly yellow or golden soma or homa, comprised all the medicinal and curative powers of the vegetable kingdom, and the heavenly or white homa was the elixir of life, by drinking which at the resurrection all the good will become immortal. So the heavenly homa was invoked and adored, and the earthly soma, the “plant of renown,” was treated as divine even when being gathered and utilised for sacrifice. With much apology at the appointed season the plant was cut by one who in cutting was not to think of the plant, but of an enemy, or if not of an enemy, then of a straw, for thus not soma but something evil was slain.³ On the fifth day of the cere-

¹ Satapatha Brahmana, 4, iii., Kânda, 7, Adhyaya, 30, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxvi. pp. 181-199.

² For description, see Haug, *Aitareya Brahmana*, vol. ii. p.

489; also *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxvi. p. xxiv. introd.

³ Satapatha Brahmana, iii., Kânda, 9, Adhyaya, 4, Brahmana, 1-28, in *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxvi.; *Rig*

monial, at morning, mid-day, and evening celebrations, libations of juice prepared from it were poured into the fire, while part was imbibed by the priests and part by the institutors of the sacrifice, who by the antecedent sacrifice had been initiated or regenerated into persons duly qualified to partake of it. The ceremony thus became the very highest action of the Indian religion, and its intention was unmistakable. The soma was the representative or substitute of a god, the victim previously offered was the substitute of the offerer. In the sacrifice of the animal he rendered himself, and as the sacrifice ascended through the fire, he was himself borne upwards to the society of the gods, with whom he partook of the divine nectar, and became thereby a sharer in their illumination and immortality.

The ritual of this very ancient soma sacrifice, which probably originated in the childlike desire to maintain friendship with familiar gods, which inspired the bloodless sacrifices of the earliest Vedic times,¹ marks, as described in the Brahmanas, higher conceptions of man's relations to deity. The gods of the Brahmanas are not familiar deities; the distance between them and man is felt to be greater, and yet the desire for union and equal fellowship is deeper. The gulf that separated them could only be bridged by a sacrifice, in which, in substitute, the votary offered himself. We

Veda, 97, 17; The Hôṃ Yast, ix. 32, in *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxxi. pp. 231-234; and Farg.

xx. 4, in vol. iv. pp. 219-223.

¹ Haug, *Essays on the Parsis*, p. 241.

must not conclude, however, that this substitution carried with it any idea of the innocent taking the place of the guilty. That idea never took hold of the Indian conscience. The Indian conception of sin was that of personal demerit, not that of conscious offence against a righteous power. The highest gods revered by men were manifestations of the same spirit that animated themselves, and the Indian rejected any hope of finding deliverance from evil and entrance into heaven in any other way than by working out his own salvation. Even in the self-torture and immolation to which we have referred, there was no idea of penance. There was nothing akin to the motive which led a Syrian to seek reconciliation with an offended neighbour or god by shedding his blood in his presence, and which made the designation of "ethkash-shaf" over a wide region of Western Asia the equivalent for "making supplication."¹ The whole intention of the self-immolator and the offerer of the soma sacrifice was to pile up, by these painful or costly processes, such an amount of merit as would enable him to climb up into the world of the devas, and thereafter to secure his own deliverance from the circle of endless change.²

¹ *Religion of the Semites*, p. 303.

² Mr. Scott, in *Foregleams of Christianity*, p. 7, quoting M. Alf. Maury's *La Religion des Aryans en croyances et legendes de l'Antiquité*, notes a correspondence between the Indian myth and the Christian Gospel. Soma, identified with Agni below and

with Indra above, in a combustible substance that has sprung from the earth, through the operation of the air, has acquired new properties through the process of crushing. The myth, according to him, is suggestive of a suffering victim, born of an earthly mother through the operation of the Divine Spirit, and

The same observation applies to the costly and elaborate funeral ceremonies, and to the extraordinary offices comprehended under the designation "shraddha,"—the equivalent to a mass for the dead,—which occupied so prominent a place in the Brahman religion. All over the world, and in all religions, at a certain level of belief, death was accompanied by sacrificial rites intended to provide the dead with sufficient equipment and retinue for his journey to, and for his career in the world of shades. The original sacrifices of wives and slaves and animals have everywhere been commuted. Yet, as late as 1781, in Germany, at the burial of a knight of the Teutonic order, his horse was actually sacrificed and was cast into his grave; and still the pathetic spectacle of an officer's fully-accoutred steed led in the mournful procession at his funeral, reminds us of the grim heathen rite which survived so long in Christendom.¹ In India, suttee, the burn-

becoming a victorious Saviour and medium of inspiration—the Sun of Righteousness. It may be legitimate for us to construe the old belief into an allegory of our faith, but only because we are wise after the event. The ancient Greeks in their worship of Dionysus emerging from his sufferings inflicted by adverse powers (τὰ Διονύσου πάθη) with renovated glory to liberate the mind from its intoxication and bewilderment (see Müller's *Dissertations on the Eumenides*, p. 226) is another suggestive "correspond-

ence"; but is only suggestive to us "on whom the ends of the world have come." We can utilise the old form to express the newly revealed truth, but the idea originally inspiring the form was anti-christian.

¹ Kemble, *Horæ Feralis*, p. 66; Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. i. p. 428.

Little images of stone, clay, and wood were substituted for the wives and slaves and animals in Japan. The once costly offerings of clothes and ornaments in India have come to be repre-

ing of the widow with the corpse of her husband—a custom neither Vedic nor Brahmanic, but incorporated from the aboriginal tribes—prevailed until our day. It is now happily abolished, but reverence for the dead, and a sense of obligation to help them, continue to be expressed in very prolonged and costly sacrificial rites and exercises, which had their origin in immemorial antiquity. According to Manu,¹ the intention of a shraddha, which only begins when the proper funeral solemnities have been completed, is first to provide the man who has gone out of sight in the flame of his pyre with an ethereal body. When this has been accomplished through adequate oblations of rice and flour, and sufficient libations of water, the next object of those who “are alive and remain” is to deliver the departed from Yama, and from the penalties of the hell called Put. Yama was the Indian original of Pluto and Minos, before whose judgment-seat all the dead over whom he has

sented by a woollen thread and some tiny cakes. In China, paper imitations of men and horses, clothes and money, yea of houses, with paper keys to open and shut them, are despatched by fire to the dead for their use. The many articles of domestic and personal utility, and the trifles which, all over the world, are found in old graves, may be accounted for by the same belief. Till very recently the coin for Charon’s toll, and the cake to quiet Cerberus, were placed in the

coffin of Irish and Celtic peasants; and the lights which are frequently kept burning around it, like the fires which in more ancient times were kindled at the grave, were all intended to aid the progress of the deceased in his mysterious pilgrimage.—Schoolcraft, *Indian Transactions*, vol. iv. p. 55; Longfellow, *Hiawatha*, part xix.; Davis, *The Chinese*, vol. i. p. 276; Colebrooke’s *Essays*, vol. i. 161 seq.

¹ Manu, ix. 1381, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxv.

power are confronted with the records of their past, and judged according to their deeds. Over the devotees of Siva, Vishnu, Brahma, and specially over those whose dying has been protected by ceremonies performed by properly rewarded priests, he is believed to have no power.¹ All others when tried and judged by him, are led by his messengers each to their own place in one of the numerous Indian heavens or hells. It is a prospect which even good men may well face with the utmost dread ; but faith in the efficacy of the Brahman rites, in the merit of their own donations to the priests, and in the value of the services rendered for them by their relatives after death, enables them to meet it not only with composure, but even with confident hope. If only sufficiently abundant merit be accumulated by and for them, they will surely be delivered from the pains of hell (put), and attain to beatification as pitris—glorified ancestors—in the realms of the gods.²

¹ *Vishnu Purana*, iii. 7.

² The Brahmans, if properly fee'd, granted what was akin to absolution before death and after it, and in some instances they appear to have become surety for the dead. It is recorded that when a rajah of Tanjore died, his bones, burned to powder, were mixed with boiled rice and eaten by twelve Brahmans, who took upon themselves to answer for all his demerits. From the Punjab it has been reported that a Brahman, paid for the purpose, ate rice out of a dead man's hand as

his surety, and then he abandoned the territory as one who had lost caste by the transaction. A strange reminiscence of this belief survived in Wales, where at funerals poor and abject people were hired for a loaf of bread, a bowl of beer, and a silver coin, to take upon themselves the sins of the deceased.—Dubois, *Mœurs du Peuple de l'Inde*, vol. ii. p. 32 ; Richardson, *Punjab Notes and Queries*, vol. i. 674 ; Aubrey, *Remains of Gentilism and Judaism. Folk Lore Society Publications*, 1881, p. 35.

Even after the deceased had become a pitri or glorified ancestor, the shraddha is believed to be an important means of ministering to his welfare ; for by the essence of the offerings of his posterity his progress is supposed to be accelerated through future blessed births till he attains to final union with the absolute. We find the same belief in all pagan religions ; in some cases it was expressed in peculiarly solemn rites which, in forms more refined, reappeared early in perverted Christianity. In India it supplies a striking illustration of the inconsistencies of religious belief. For, according to one of the oldest and most unbending of Indian dogmas—that of Karma—a man lives by his own righteousness only, suffers for his own iniquity, and works out his own salvation apart from any help which may be accorded by others. Yet from immemorial ages the orthodox and pious have only been able to face the great ordeal of death, when sustained by the hope that they will profit after it, by merit accumulated for them by their surviving relatives, through such simple and easy methods as the offering of little cakes to themselves, and that of feeding and feeing the priests who are their representatives on earth.¹ It is an inconsistency far more pathetic than ludicrous, for it indicates that man's religious instincts are stronger than his metaphysics. The help rendered by the pious survivors counts of course for merit to themselves, but it is an

¹ "He who gives water and shoes to a Brahman will find water to refresh him and shoes to wear in his journey to the next world, while the gift of a house will secure him a palace in it."—Ward, *The Hindoos*, vol. ii. p. 284.

outcome of the essential belief, which no degradation, even that of savagery, can obliterate, and which the Gospel has formulated with unmistakable precision, that though every man must "bear his own burden," no man "liveth unto himself," for he can only "work out his own salvation" by working for the redemption of others.

The religion of India is said to contain all the ideas which are expressed in the rites of other pagan religions, but in other religions some of these ideas are more clearly elucidated. In some cases, moreover, they are applied with the result of producing divergences almost amounting to contradictions to the Indian beliefs. No more striking illustration of this can be found than in the religion of Iran, whose sacred Avesta, the more it is examined and compared with the Vedas, clearly indicates that both are traceable to a common source. Though flowing originally from the same fountain of thought, those literatures represent developments so independent that the same words express quite different conceptions, and the same sacrificial rites are employed to gain quite opposite ends. The devas of the Vedas are the demons of the Avesta. The Asuras of the Brahmanas are enemies of devas and of men—though in the Vedas, they are only ethereal in contradistinction to corporeal beings—yet Ahura in the Avesta is the sacred name of deity.¹

This difference was the result, not of any "religious revolution in prehistoric times,"² nor of any violent

¹ Haug, *Essays on the Parsis*, pp. 139, 276, 284.

² Syed Ameer Ali, *Life and Teaching of Mohammed*, p. 7.

reaction against primitive beliefs. It was rather the outcome of slow movements which by imperceptible degrees led the minds of men who were living under healthier physical and intellectual conditions, farther and farther apart from the thoughts of their kindred not so favourably influenced.¹ In the Vedas there are said to be germs of monotheism in the unseen force felt to be behind all forces; and germs also of dualism, in the conflict between the powers malevolent and benevolent to man. As the Aryans descended into India and degenerated through admixture with the lower races into Hindoos, the metaphysical spirit gained hold of them, and both of these original notions grew gradually weaker, till finally they disappeared under its resolving power in a coarse pantheism on the higher side, and in its lower in a confusion of good and evil approaching to animism. The Iranians on the other hand, living a practical life in a much healthier climate, clung persistently to both notions, and went on developing and applying them. And so, it came to pass that out of the "Asuras," the spiritual beings conceived of by their ancestors to be superior to man, one came to be worshipped as supreme over all the others, who became his messengers or heavenly host. All but one, and that one, and all things living that cleave to him, became the enemy of the Supreme. For him, and for his wicked works, Ahura is not responsible, seeing he did not

¹ Mills, *Introd. to the Gathas*, p. xxii. *seq.*, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxxi. ; Darmesteter,

Contemporary Review, Oct. 1879, p. 283; Müller, *Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 249.

create him ; but not having the power at once to destroy him, he endeavours to do so by unceasingly warring against him. The history of the world is the history of that war in heaven and earth, which must continue till darkness, death, and evil are extinguished, and light and life and good shall stand forth triumphant in a resurrection which will restore all things. This conception of a conflict between gods and demons almost faded in India from the thought of a people who dreamed that both were fleeting emanations of the same indifferent being. In Persia it was intensified in the thought of a people who had a great deal of actual fighting to do, till being was conceived of as infinite light, the source not of all that is, but of all that thinks and knows. Deity was infinite intelligence communicating at man's request the divine word or law for the conquest and ultimate extermination of ignorance, impurity, and death.

This is an idea of religion very different from that of the Hindoo, whose highest aim was to extricate himself altogether from the universe. The orthodox Iranian on the contrary sought by ranging himself on the side of the good deity Ahura-mazdha, to contract and destroy as much as he could of the dominion of Ahriman (Angra Manyu), the evil power. It involved quite another doctrine of sacrifice, as being effectual not in the first instance at least to obtain a man's deliverance, but as service rendered to the good deity. It was not so much an act of worship, as a real assistance to Ahura's hosts, who though ethereal needed the

sustenance of material offerings and the encouragement of human praise. When unaided by sacrifices, and by prayers or spells believed to be as potent as sacrifices, they became weak and fled helpless before their foes ; but when "the holy meat and flesh, and the most holy homa," were offered *to* but not *in* the fire, and when the spells of pious men were projected between earth and heaven, the armies of light prevailed to displace the hosts of darkness, and overthrow "the murderers of the good, the fiends who hate and torment them for their faith."¹

In the Avesta as in the Brahmanas, sacrifice is regarded as a mighty power, but the Avesta demands what the Brahmanas never suggest, that to be efficacious, it must express the righteous disposition and pure intention of the sacrificer. The ceremonial was indeed grossly superstitious, and was founded upon very childish myths, but these came to be infused with moral ideas which the Indian wholly lacked. The interpretation of the myths was gradually refined, tending more and more towards pure theism, and even monotheism ; and the development of the rites, unlike that of the Brahmanas, which issued in the gross magic of the Tantras, was in the direction of purer and more ethical conceptions of religion. A Persian, unlike a Brahman, could never hope to climb into heaven just by his sacrifices. Even when offered with pure intention

¹ Darmesteter, *Ormuzd und Ahriman*, p. 87 ; Vendidad, Farg. v. 25, note 3, and Farg. xix. 9, 43, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. iv. ; Yasna, lxi., in *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxxi.

they were efficacious only in limiting the power of Ahriman and in extending the dominion of Ahura. In sacrificing to help the dead on their mysterious and dangerous journey, in honouring them as "fravashis" at the yearly festival Afrînagan, their principal object was to defend the kingdom of Ahura from the baleful impurity of death. Whatever personal benefit it secured to the worshippers was all expressed in the renunciation of Ahriman and all his works. It was reckoned as only one of the ways by which the kingdom of Ahura could be advanced. By carefully defending himself from the defiling power of death and by destroying the Ahrimanian creatures, he was helping on the cause of good, as truly as when offering sacrifice. For all these, if he had done righteously and lived purely, he would be recompensed in the resurrection; but if he had done wrong, no sacrifice could save him from the penalty of his evil. Wicked actions as in Buddha's creed, could not be undone, but must work out their full retribution.

The great defect of the religion, however, was that wickedness did not consist in injustice, or cruelty, or impurity in our sense of the words, but in sacrilege. The worst crimes were defilement by contact with death, desecration of the holy fire, and the slaying or even injuring of any of the holy creatures. Of a remission of such offences, save through personal endurance of the penalties attached to them here and hereafter, the Avesta knew nothing. No sacrifice, no offering could expiate them, or turn aside the sweep of the inexorable law. The criminal had to

suffer first the very cruel death awarded to him and then proceed to endure terrible torments in another world. It would appear that if, truly penitent, he made a becoming confession according to a formula called the Patet, his soul was saved, so that though he suffered the full penalty here, he was exempted from any in the hereafter. It is averred that this is an idea which at a late period of its history, Persian religion borrowed from a purer faith.¹ It probably did, and yet it is interesting to find that at a very early period Iranian religion had its idea of the unpardonable sin, the sacrilege or anaperetha that was inexpiable by death through any torture here, or by any conceivable torment in the world to come.²

The highest act of Brahmanic worship was communion in the soma sacrifice, but in the religion of China, the religion of a very practical people, this idea of communion in sacrifice received a far clearer and purer embodiment. In the books of the Li Ki³ are contained treatises on "Ki Fa," the Law of Sacrifice, "Ki I," the Meaning of Sacrifice, and "Ki Thung," the Origin of Sacrifice, which indicate conceptions superior to those of any other pre-Christian religion, the Hebrew of course being excepted. The doctrines which are set forth and the rites which are described in these treatises are said to be very ancient. The worship was unmistakably that of polytheism, for it was addressed to the sun and moon, and to such forces

¹ Spiegel, Introd. to the *Khurd-avesta*, translated by Bleeck.

² Vendidad, Farg. iii. 20, seq., ix. 49 note, Farg. iv. 20, 24, 28,

Farg. i. 13, 17, Farg. vii. 23, in *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. iv.

³ *Sacred Books of the East*, vols. xxvii. and xxviii.

of nature as contributed to promote human comfort ; but the tendency toward the conception of the One Absolute Sovereign power was manifest. If the sun was addressed, it was because he was supposed to be the abode of the one heavenly spirit, and of the spirits of the departed fathers. Confucius, in the 19th chapter of the " Doctrine of the Mean,"¹ records that in all their worship the object of the ancients was to reverence " Shangti "—the equivalent of " El Elion " of the patriarchs. The intention of ancient sacrificial worship was purely eucharistic, the principal sacrifices, which seem to have been offered with great religious earnestness, were expressive of the gratitude of the whole nation for benefits divinely bestowed. So sacrifice is described as " not a thing coming to man from without," but as " having its birth in the heart which, when deeply moved, expresses itself in ceremonies." Hence " only men of ability and virtue can exhibit the idea of sacrifice." " Bringing into exercise all sincerity and good faith, with all right-heartedness and reverence, they offer the proper things, and accompany them with the proper rites." " Intelligently he offered his sacrifices without seeking anything in return for them." " Such was the spirit in sacrificing."²

The most interesting of the sacrificial rites described in these books, were those performed in the ancestral temple in honour of the dead. In three ways was a

¹ *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xvii. p. 36.

seq., *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxviii.

² Li Ki, bk. xxii. 1, 2, 3,

“filial son’s service rendered to his parents: by nourishing them when alive, by mourning for them when they died, and when the mourning is over by sacrificing to them.” After death, offerings of cakes and meat were placed beside the corpse, and at the burial similar oblations were presented at the grave. “Not that the dead were supposed to partake of them, but from the oldest ages they have always been so offered, and all to cause men not to revolt from the dead.” When his tablet was erected in the ancestral temple, so that “the living might be able to think of the dead as not far away,” a sacrifice of repose like a Romish requiem mass was celebrated for him.¹ The Egyptians periodically feasted with the departed, and Greeks and Romans once a year visited and illuminated and presented libations and oblations at the tombs of the dead;² but in ancient China the dead were honoured with greater solemnity. Annually, in a royal function in which the principal celebrant was the emperor, as the representative of the whole nation, the Chinese observed their sacrifice and sacrament of memorial and communion. It was preceded by purifications, fastings, vigils, during which mourners dwelt upon the recollections of the dead, and brooded over their words, and works, and ways, so that when they entered the temple they seemed to see them in their accustomed places. With fragrant libations offered to attract them, their presence was affectionately in-

¹ *Li Ki*, ii. 8, 9.

Tac., *Hist.*, ii. 95; *Ovid*, *Fasti*, ii. 56-70; *Cicero*, *Phil.*, i. 6; *Ad*

² *Æneid*, v. 77, and ix. 215; *Attic.*, viii. 14.

voked. Then a red bull, fastened to a stone pillar, after the hairs about the ears had been inspected to make sure that they were of the proper colour, was slain by the emperor with a knife which had small bells attached to the handle. The fat from the viscera, the blood, and some of the hair were burned with incense and fragrant wood, and afterwards portions of the flesh, both raw and boiled, were offered to the invisible guests. After they had feasted, and "when their happiness and dignity had been made complete," the living relatives received their portions. Particular respect was paid to the aged, whose cups were often filled to the wish which was warmly expressed, that their old age would be blessed and their happiness be for ever complete. In some descriptions of the ceremony, the departed were personated by surviving relatives who received the homage paid to them, and with the assistance of the priest pronounced upon the living the benediction of the dead.¹

This great family sacramental reunion, in which the living revered the dead and the dead blessed the living, was rooted in one of the deepest and strongest of human sentiments. They were not the only people who sought not from curiosity by necromancy, but reverently by the rites of religion, to hold communion with the departed. Instead of speedily forgetting them, they cherished their memory, and endeavoured to cultivate their favour and to obtain their blessing. It must

¹ Shi King, bk. iii. ode 4, p. 300; Li Ki, bk. xxi. 17; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. iii. Mencius, bk. vi. ch. v.

not be dismissed by us as only a superstition, whose survival among ourselves is affection's offering of flowers at the graves of our beloved. It was the expression of a spiritual instinct which, like the craving of the Brahman for union with the Divine, and the aspiration of the Iranian to be found on the side of Ahura and against his enemies, is of the essence of universal religion. As such it has been assumed and purified and satisfied by Christianity. It was the natural man's conception of the Communion of Saints, which the Saviour has corrected and realised, in the institution—not of the Church's festival of All Saints—but of the Sacrament of the Supper. In that ordinance we hold communion with Christ Himself, and with all who having died in Him are now alive with Him for evermore. Thus, knit together as God's elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of His Son Christ our Lord, we obtain grace "so to follow the blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys prepared for them that unfeignedly love Him."¹ In China this ancestral sacrifice was productive of much good. They were a thoughtful and provident people, who saw that such observances tended to promote loyalty, wise government, and social order. Many quotations might be cited from the ritual which clearly declare their noble intention, and the history of China shows how effectually by means of them great multitudes of people were welded together; and it must be confessed that in

¹ Collect for All Saints' Day.

respect of industry, filial reverence, and piety the Chinese will compare favourably with many communities in Christendom not pervaded by a very lively faith in the blessed verity of the Communion of Saints.¹

It is because of the deep universal concern as to what of human life lies beyond death that the worship of another great religion is so interesting. It is reflected in the relics of a people quite distinct, as far as can be traced, from the Aryan branch of the human family, and representing probably the oldest civilisation in the world. At the very earliest monumental epoch, the religion of Egypt is stated to have been completely systematised.² Though the character of that religion is still a subject of great perplexity and considerable obscurity, there is a general consensus of opinion that on its popular side it was a multitudinous polytheism, whose rites were grossly idolatrous, and in many instances flagrantly indecent and immoral.³ This manifold variety of gods and of modes of worship was due to the many distinct communities in which they originated, each having its own peculiar ideas and customs. By

¹ *Li Ki*, xxi. 13.

² Lenormant, *Manual d'Histoire de l'Orient*, vol. i. p. 521.

³ Indications of savage notions are frequent, as in the periodical processions of the sacred animals or images through the streets and along their water-courses to receive, like the procession of the Host, the adoration of the people, and to bestow blessing by their passage. Also, at the sacrifice of

the sacred ram at Mendes, when the statue of the goddess was clad in its skin, and the votaries made loud lamentations, and beat themselves as they did in mourning for a dead relative. The Egyptians however did not *cut* themselves in mourning or in worship as did the Syrians, but smote themselves upon their breasts. (Strabo, xxii. 551; Herod., ii. 122, 171; Wilkinson, *Ancient Egypt*, iii. 381.)

and by as the people consolidated, these local groups of gods were combined or arranged into a hierarchy, in which were classed first the "*great gods*," then next to them the powers or "*the mighty ones*," and then "*the genii*," their ministers. The same hierarchy was presented in the local triads worshipped in particular cities; for one member of these had a decided pre-eminence over the second, who was generally, though not always, a goddess, and in relation to her the third occupied a lower footing. The triad of Thebes consisted of father, mother, and son, and these were worshipped at Philæ, as Osiris, Isis, and Horus.¹ Latterly the worship of Isis became national, and when imported into Rome she—as merciful mediator with the stern Osiris holding her son in her arms—was as devoutly worshipped in the Augustan era as is the Madonna in Italy to-day. It is averred that these triads were sometimes represented as three gods in one, as for example, in a porcelain idol worn as a charm, in which were combined the body of Ptha, the supreme nature god, the hawk's wings of Horus, and the ram's head of Kneph. Osiris, Isis, and Horus had for their symbol the triangle, so when we realise that the central belief in Egyptian mythology was the killing of Osiris by Typhon, the old serpent, and his resurrection after burial by Isis to be king and judge of the dead, we shall find ourselves confronted with pathetic suggestions as to the source of the corruptions which were afterwards to paganise Christian

¹ Herodotus, ii. 25; Bunsen, *linson, History of Ancient Egypt*,
Egypt, vol. i. pp. 364, 409; Raw- vol. i. p. 403.

worship, and also of the conceptions which influenced the formulation of the Christian creed. It is no longer a surprise to learn that the doctrine of the Trinity was first crystallised in the theology of the Egyptian fathers of the church, or that one form of the doctrine of the Atonement which represented the devil as compelled to surrender the souls of sinners over whom he had acquired a right—in compensation for his mistake in killing the innocent Son of God—should have so early originated and so long held its place in our Christian theology.¹

But it is not by its popular mythology and gross physiolatry that Egyptian religion is to be judged. Those who take the lowest view of it admit that in its highest conceptions, the many gods of the people were only attributes of One from whom all variety proceeds, and whose name it would be sacrilege to utter. Though aiming so high, it was never clear in its view, for it was “full of the contradictions of a people unable logically to elaborate their religious conceptions.”² In some respects it is described as dualistic like the Persian, in others pantheistic like the Brahman creed; and yet taken as a whole it represented thought at quite an opposite pole from the Indian belief. Instead of absolute Being, it worshipped endless variety of form. Deity, instead of being perfectly excarnated, was continually incarnating itself in everything. Body from which the Brahman sought to escape was not allowed

¹ Clarke, *Ten Great Religions*, p. 255.

² Rawlinson, *History of Ancient Egypt*, vol. i. p. 316.

by the Egyptian to perish. India contemplating eternity forgot time, and had no history ; but to Egypt every moment was sacred, and "men were so occupied in recording the present upon their monuments, that though they have thereby recorded a mighty past, they have given us no era from which by dating backward or forward, we can fix their chronology." ¹

The gods, by the intelligent, were conceived to be upon the side of justice, and to them prayers, praise, and sacrifice were acceptable only as the worship of upright hearts. Many of the ethical precepts in the hymns resemble the maxims of the Book of Proverbs. They praise "wisdom," tell us that "a man's heart rules a man," that "the life of the wicked is what the wise know to be death," that "our secrets are all known to Him who made our inner nature," and that "to Him having died we must give a strict account of all the deeds done in the body." This last belief was the central one in their esoteric theology, and they marked their deep sense of its importance by their costly sepulchres and by their impressive burial rites. The dwellings of the living were considered to be simply "inns," upon the erection and adornment of which little cost and skill were expended, but upon the construction of their "everlasting habitations" (pa-t'eten)² no possible expenditure and magnificence were deemed excessive. The living were treated with respect, but the dead as exalted to *quasi* divinity by their liberation from the

¹ Clarke, *Ten Great Religions*, p. 226.

² Diodorus, i. 51.

body, were entreated to help them in difficulties and protect them in danger; while in turn they sought to assist them in their progress through the other world, and especially in the terrible ordeal which after death awaited them in the halls of Amenti, by the observance of a ritual such as no religion ever knew.

It is not in the ritual of the Book of the Dead, but in the high beliefs which are suggested rather than expressed in it, that we find the true reaching forth of Egyptian religion toward the revelation of the Gospel. The details of the ceremonies, the very first purpose of which is to restore to the dead man the use of all the members of his body, are as childish as are those of the Indian shraddha. Its rules also as to the employment of amulets and of magical charms to protect the soul against its ghostly foes, and help it over its difficulties, are only equalled by the notions of savages. But side by side with these absurdities are expressed convictions of the continuity of life after death, and of the operation of the law of retribution, which may fully be held to compensate for a vast amount of gross superstition. The soul of the dead had to pass two ordeals. First, he had to submit to a trial and judgment on earth by his fellow-men, in which he had to be acquitted, or be without an accuser, before his mourning relatives could be authorised to convey his mummy to the place prepared for it. Even if he survived this test, his soul, led by Horus, past Cerberus the guardian of the gates, was brought to where the infallible scales were erected within the halls of judgment. Into one of these scales were

placed, not as in Persia and India, his good actions, to be weighed against the bad, but his heart, as representing the entire moral character, to be weighed against an image of truth. If he was found wanting, he was condemned by Osiris to return to earth in the form of an unclean animal, to undergo a cycle of transmigration proportioned to his misdeeds, and designed to lead him to repentance. In due season he had to return to judgment, and if, after many trials, he was found reprobate, he was doomed as a castaway to absolute annihilation. If, on the contrary, he was on the first or any subsequent occasion justified, Horus, taking in his hand "the tablet of Thoth,"¹ directed him into the ways that lead to felicity in the heaven of Osiris. Not that as acquitted in judgment he was qualified to enjoy that blessedness, but he was then allowed to embark in the "boat of the sun" in which by good spirits he was conducted to the "pools of peace." There freed in a baptism of fire from all infirmities and impurities, he was permitted to enjoy the delights of the kingdom of Osiris for three thousand years. At the close of that period he re-entered his body, lived once more a human life with the same issue, and the process having been reiterated till a certain mythic cycle was completed, he was finally, as perfectly blessed, resolved or absorbed into the Divine Essence.²

While this was in outline the belief of the initiated

¹ Compare "the white stone" and the "new name" of Rev. ii. 20.

² Wilkinson, *Ancient Egypt*, vol. iii. pp. 454, 463; Rawlinson,

History, vol. i. p. 317; Birch, *Egypt from Earliest Times*, Introd. p. x.; Bunsen, *Egypt*, vol. v. p. 263.

Egyptian regarding the future and final destiny of man, the belief of the masses appears to have been that unless in very exceptional cases, the "*metempsychosis*" or transmigration of the soul through "the circle of necessity,"¹—that is, through the whole range of animal existence—till at last he re-entered his own body, was the fate of every man. Instead of being retributive in its purpose, it was a condition of progress. It was not a degradation, but an education in which the soul by passing through all the lower organisations, gathered up all their varied lives till, as Tennyson suggests,—

"All experience past became,
Consolidate in mind and frame."²

¹ Herodotus, ii. 82, 123.

² It is interesting to find the same suggestion in another of our nineteenth century poet seers. Browning says, in "*Prince Hohenstiel Schwangau*,"

"I like the thought He should have lodged me once
I' the hole, the cave, the hut, the tenement,
The mansion, and the palace ; made me learn
The feel o' the first, before I found myself
Loftier in the last."

One of his best interpreters remarks that this way upward from the lowest stage through every other to the highest, so far from lowering us to the brute level is the only way for us to attain to the true highest, the all-complete. "On this supposition," says he, "we are able to account—

"for many a thrill
Of kinship I confess to with the power
Called Nature ; animate, inanimate,
In part or in the whole, there's something there
Manlike that somehow meets
The man in me."

—Prof. Henry Jones, *Browning as a Philosophical and Religious Teacher*, p. 213.

It was in any view a probationary and purificatory experience, necessary for entrance into "Aalu." Its duration was said to occupy two Sothic periods of three thousand years, though Plato in *Phædo* mentions ten thousand years, unless in the case of those who have "philosophised sincerely and who have loved the beautiful." These in the third period of a thousand years, proceed to their pristine abode, as we see them depicted in the symbol of the human-headed hawk, carrying two wings in its talons and flying towards the solar splendour. It is supposed, however, that this κύκλος ἀνάγκης was shortened by the amount of time that the body resisted decay, for until it had decayed the departed did not set forth upon his pilgrimage. For this reason therefore the body was embalmed, and also for another reason which has been adduced, that the old habitation might be preserved in a condition to receive and minister to its former occupant when the soul had completed its orbit. All this, however, is conjecture, for the real intention of the Egyptians in preserving the dead body and in adorning their sepulchres was not disclosed by themselves, and has not been discovered by any one else. It is probable that it was connected with "belief in the resurrection of the body," but this may be only an inference which we draw from the fact that they did preserve the body with the utmost care, for we have no decided evidence that belief in the resurrection of the body was an article in the Egyptian creed.¹

¹ Wilkinson, *Ancient Egypt*, vol. iii. p. 465.

Clear and strong, however, was the conviction of the continuity of life after death, and of the inexorable operation of the law of retribution, under which, as matter of "necessity," each disembodied person must receive award according to the deeds done in the flesh. Very strong also was the desire, as in India and Persia, to render to the departed in their ordeal, when they entered the other world through the gates of truth, what assistance they could. This desire has found expression in every religion; among the Jews, in the days of the Saviour, it is said to have found an outlet in prayers for the dead; and very early in the corruption of our own religion, it gave rise to those requiem masses which are still celebrated over so wide an area of Christendom. It is interesting to note the source from which were borrowed not only such functions, but also such festivals as the Christmas feast of the unconquered sun, the Candlemas festival of purification, and many other usages and rites, which, by minds of a mediæval cast, are considered distinctive of Christianity.¹ But the most valuable predictive element of that mysterious religion is the truth—often very crudely expressed even by Christians, who are misled by the figures and metaphors through which alone it can be communicated to us—that death is the real awakening, the true disclosure to us of the nature of things, and especially of ourselves to ourselves. In the present stage of existence there is much to dull the vision and drug the moral sense, and

¹ Sharpe, *Egyptian Mythology and Egyptian Christianity*, 1863, *passim*.

yet at times we are forced to tremble at the foretastes of that inevitable experience, when stripped of all that can conceal or disguise, and in the presence of One whose love was strong enough to bear the burden of our shame, we shall know and judge ourselves as God is always doing.

The higher or esoteric religion of Egypt very powerfully influenced the belief of the educated classes of Rome, and especially of Greece. Egypt was originally to Greece what Greece was afterwards to Rome, the land of culture to whose centres of learning and worship every student of philosophy or religion had to repair. And yet though importing from Egypt the oracles, the mysteries, and the names of the great gods, and though indebted to it for many a hint, Greece moulded her religion after her own independent fashion into something quite distinct from, and most unlike to the religion of Egypt. The religion of Greece was bright and joyous, while that of Egypt was sombre and awful. The gods of Egypt were mysterious powers, dwelling invisible and apart in abodes which were never known, but the popular gods of Greece were familiar and neighbourly beings, residing in every glen and forest, and traceable at every fountain and brook. Living upon something like equality with men, if they did not inspire delight they certainly were not a terror. As Greece had neither sacred books nor priestly caste, her religion could hardly be a restraint either to mind or conscience. It never could be reduced to forms that could endure or be long regarded as binding. It was

always in transition, and because stimulating, instead of restraining imagination and limiting intellect, it was really in perpetual development. So, by a series of imperceptible gradations, it passed from the religion of the people to that of the poets and artists, and finally to that of the philosophers. By them their beautiful but capricious and immoral gods, who interfered in human affairs rather as mischief makers than as doing good, were reduced to symbols ; and ancient Zeus, the father of gods and men, was sublimated into *θεός*, the Divine element and power in whom and by whom all things consist.

Like all other ancient peoples, who had advanced to civilisation, the true religion of the Greeks was quite distinct from the popular one, which was indeed very gross in its beliefs, and often very savage in its rites.¹ Even as installed in the pantheon of Olympus, the gods influenced only a small part of the life of man. They sufficed when the days were good, and when it was a pleasant thing to behold the sun ; but when the best days were not good, and man had no pleasure in them,

¹ There seems a great gulf fixed between the "fair humanities" that appear in Homer's word-pictures, and the Here who was worshipped as a plant, the Athene who was a stake, or the Zeus who was a rock. It is hard to believe that the Olympians were once regarded very much as the savage regarded his totem, but such designations as Dionysus the Cannibal, and Zeus the Glutton,

already referred to, and the confessions of their own historians and philosophers (Herod., vii. 197 ; Arist., *Pol.*, ii. 8, 21 ; Plato, *Laws*, 677-686) place beyond doubt these relationships, and establish the fact that not only in the Homeric age, but in the very late time of Pausanius the popular gods of Greece were worshipped after very barbarous fashions.

and when death stared him in the face, and conscience began to demand what was beyond death, the gods were felt to be powerless to help him. The tendency of the Greek mind was to refine and purify its conceptions, and as the Greeks grew to know something of the worth of a man, their deities became less human and less attractive. The more they questioned their own natures the more they discovered that they were governed by laws whose sweep of operation no worship of the bright gods could in the least affect. Long before Solon succeeded in uniting the warring sections of the Attic people under one political and religious system, a secret religion, concerning itself with the moral government of the world and destiny of man, had emerged. Aiming at utilising beliefs to stimulate righteous conduct, this esoteric religion continued to develop itself, until about the time of Æschylos, when it was not only formulated but legalised in the ritual of "*the mysteries*."

There were several mysteries in ancient Greece—as for example the Mithraic, the Orphic, the Phrygian—but of all of them the Eleusinian were the most widely popular and most truly representative. Great divergence of opinion has from ancient times prevailed as to their real significance and worth, but though it is unquestionable that they ultimately degenerated into fantastic trivialities and licentious orgies, the testimonies of Sophocles, Plato, Epictetus, Cicero,—indeed of all master minds of Greece and Rome—and the references of the Christian Fathers¹ force us to conclude

¹ Clem. Alex., *Strom.*, v. 689.

that their original intention and their effect for long was to lead the initiated to a truer knowledge and a purer life. They were designed, according to Plato, to “restore the soul to the state from which it fell, as from its natural seat of perfection.” They were truly called “initia,” says Cicero,¹ “for they are the beginnings of a life of reason and virtue, whence we not only receive the benefit of a more comfortable existence here, but are taught to hope for and to aspire to a better life hereafter.” Commenting upon this passage, one of the best modern classical authorities has said that “the only reasonable cause which can account for the enthusiasm with which the noblest writers of the old world testify in their favour, was that through the mysteries was revealed a faith which enabled the initiated to die with a fair hope, and which as a consequence made them better citizens and better men.” “These mysteries to the Greek mind were its gospel of reconciliation with the offended gods.”² It is certain that they were only open to those who were conscious of no crime; an unexpiated murder was an unpardonable disqualification; and so stringent were the obligations to live justly and piously, that initiation was sometimes deferred till the approach of death, from much the same superstition which afterwards deterred so many from receiving the sacraments of the Christian Church.³

From the hints and suggestions given by the classical

¹ *De Leg.*, ii. 14. ² Mahaffy, *Rambles and Studies in Greece*, pp. 153-6.

³ So Aristophanes in the *Pax* makes Trygacus say—

Δεῖ γὰρ μνηθῆναι με πρὶν τεθνηκέναι,

quoted by Warburton, *Div. Leg. of Moses*, book ii. sect. 4, vol. ii.

writers, we may safely infer that these mysteries represented the religion of the individual, who through initiation was introduced into communion with Deity. "Initiation, according to Sopater,¹ establishes a kinship of the soul with the Divine nature." So though there is divergence amounting almost to contrast between the soma sacrifice of their Aryan ancestors upon "the dome of the world" in Vedic times, and the mysteries which the Greeks celebrated at Eleusis in the times of both their tragic poets, their root idea and many similarities attest their common origin. Thousands of years had passed since the forefathers of the composite people known as Pelasges and Hellenes left their primeval home. They had not only traversed, but they had lived in many lands, where unlike their Indian kinsmen, they were always coming into touch with people who could contribute toward their education. Persia, Babylonia, Phoenicia had helped them to purify their conceptions, till their poets and philosophers were almost stammering the Divine name which the Hebrew prophets were inspired to proclaim. The Greek idea of Deity was immensely higher than the Brahman, and so the Greek mysteries were purer, but their intention was the same, and the means employed to give effect to it were similar. Initiation was preceded by a long and painful process of purification, extending over an elaborate series of stages which in ordinary cases lasted for months, and for years in the case of candidates for the higher degree. Severe fasting, much physical fatigue,

¹ Quoted in *Ency. Brit.*, vol. xvii. p. 125.

conditions and exercises calculated powerfully to stimulate the imagination and develop enthusiasm, were employed to prepare candidates for the supreme action. They were supposed to die to the old life, and to be revived as new creatures, so all the ceremonial was designed to affect and agitate the mind as in dying. Through long and laborious wanderings, in intense silence and darkness, they arrived at the verge of the great and solemn change. Trembling and horror-stricken they were forced to contemplate spectacles such as Æneas witnessed in his passage through the under world.¹ Then came the sudden plunge into light, when amid ravishing music and gorgeous dramatic displays "*the sacred libation, conferring life and knowledge to apprehend the holy things revealed, was partaken of,*" and because made thereby regenerate and perfect, they were free to "behold or touch or kiss the holy things and to converse with the blessed."² It was man's highest experience when he felt his purest emotions and could indulge his loftiest fancies. So Euripides counts blessed the man who has been initiated into the mysteries, and Sophocles testifies that all other experiences compared with that was full of misery, for life was only to be enjoyed there.³

¹ According to Warburton the *Sixth Book of the Æneid* describes the mysteries revealed in the crowning act of communion, and by other authorities the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* is held to depict the mysteries of Isis.

² Clem. Alex., *Protrep.*, ii. 12, 18.

³ ὦ μάκαρ ὅστις εὐδαίμων τελετὰς θεῶν

εἰδώς.

(Eurip., *Bacch.*)

Τοῖς δὲ μόνοις ἐκεῖ

Ζῆν ἐστί· τοῖς δ' ἄλλοισι πάντ' ἐκεῖ κακά. (*Frag.* 719, Sophocles.)

The mysteries represent the highest endeavour of paganism to realise sacramental communion with deity, and the effect of the strained enthusiasm which they evoked—so contrary to the native disposition of the Greek—was intellectual expansion and moral stimulus. Among the educated it was considered a suspicious thing if a person, however virtuous otherwise, was not initiated at least in the lowest degree. Initiation in the higher degrees, as an ἐπόπτης, and in the highest of all as a ἱεροφάντης or δαδουῆχος, to whom the whole revelation was imparted, was regarded as the goal of only the most aspiring souls ; but, not to have been admitted as a μύστης at Eleusis, carried with it a prejudice like that attaching in Christendom to one who is unbaptized.¹ Consequently the higher teaching came to be widely diffused in society ; and so, while the rites of the public religion continued gross and degrading, there arose in Greece a literature representing a stage of religious thought only excelled by that of the Hebrew Bible. In Greece, it is true, the higher knowledge of the truth which led to the practice of piety, was communicated in mysteries for the few, while the whole Hebrew people were instructed in all the truth that had been revealed. Jehovah did not “speak to them in secret, in a dark place” in the earth, and what the prophets heard in the chambers they were instructed to proclaim from the housetops.² Yet, through the poets and philosophers of Greece began to be proclaimed truths concerning

¹ Witness the case of Socrates, *Vit. Demonax*, lib. ii.
and for later instances see Lucian,

² Euseb., *Præp. Evang.*, i. c. 6.

the moral government of the world—the retributive discipline which orders every man's way for good—and concerning the necessity for some purification, in addition to repentance and supplication, to obtain deliverance from an inherited curse—with such a power and distinctness as to give them rank next to Hebrew prophets and psalmists as *παιδαγωγοὶ εἰς Χριστόν*. The early fathers, who loved to cite the testimony of “souls naturally Christian,” had a more correct apprehension of this fact than many modern expounders of the faith. And though we can obtain from Greek authors only fragmentary glimpses of the truths of the Divine holiness, of human guilt because of alienation, and of reconciliation by sacrifice, we may profitably conclude this lecture by referring to what of their teaching bears upon the points in which we are most interested—the necessity for an expiation of some kind to ease the burdened conscience and bring peace to the penitent heart.¹

In the sacrificial rites of the ancient religions which we have been considering, we find no trace of belief in the atoning efficacy of sacrifice in our sense of the word. They were only piacular as intended to influence the general working of the cosmos for the benefit of the sacrificer, and not to make good any offence which he had committed against a righteous deity. We cannot associate them with the forgiveness of sin, for in these religions the sense of sin was so weak as to be almost non-existent. In India, as we have seen, sin was conceived of only as demerit, a misfortune rather

¹ Mahaffy, *Problems in Greek History*, pp. 197, 201.

than a fault; and though in the more ethical religions of Iran and Babylonia, it was an offence against "the law of purity," the impurity was only physical, resulting from contact with the diseased, or with the dead, or with unclean animals. The Iranian conception of the unpardonable sin—the sin that was inexpiable by death here and by torments hereafter—rose no higher than the sacrilege of burning or burying the dead, the eating of a human corpse or of the carcase of a dog. The sins which we find confessed and lamented in the so-called penitential psalms of Chaldæa,¹ are all of a similar character. The suppliant knows that one of the gods is angry because he is suffering pain, and he believes that this evil has come upon him because he has eaten or unwittingly trodden upon the unclean or forbidden thing.² The Egyptian religion rose higher than all these, in insisting upon works of justice and mercy as the proof of religious sincerity; but the purest of its prayers, and the loftiest of its hymns, express no conviction of sin, no repentance from it, and

¹ *Records of the Past*, vol. iii. p. 136; *Trans. Bib. Soc. Archæol.*, vol. ii. p. 60.

² In Babylonian religion we find the same dualism as in the Iranian. The distinction between evil and good was between elements and animals that were hostile or helpful to man, and between spirits malevolent and spirits benevolent in their relation to man. In Iran the chief struggle and the most important function of the priest, was to de-

fend from and chase out the defiling and most dangerous power of death. In Babylonia it was the existence of disease that most powerfully impressed mankind, and invested the physician with the reputation of the magician and the sanctity of the priest. As in Iran, the rites were magical, and the hymns addressed to the sun-god were of the character of incantations. —Sayce, *Hibbert Lecture*, pp. 329, 353.

no supplication for pardon. Only once or twice are the Egyptians found making any confession at all.¹ A process is described in the Ritual of the Dead for separating a man from his sins, but it consists not in confessing and repenting of, but in denying and disproving them, and in asserting his integrity. The sins which the man did not commit, and the good things which he did, are enumerated.² Even when praying upon the brink of the fire cleansing "pools of peace," "Extract all evil out of me," "Blot out my faults," the soul is found protesting five times over, "I am pure."³ In the judgment hall the heart could be weighed in the balances, even against truth, and not be found wanting; a clear indication of a much lower idea of man's relation to the Divine holiness, and of a far weaker sense of human infirmity and proneness to evil than meet us whenever and wherever we open the Bible.

In all these religions, however, at a certain level of thought, sacrifice was offered to conciliate alienated or offended deities, and to keep them propitious or favourable to men. In such a stage of belief the gods were associated with the operations of nature, and any calamity or disaster was traced to their caprice, or to their envy and jealousy of the good fortune of men. They were supposed to be active only in plague or famine or drought, to interpose in human affairs, not by giving fruitful seasons and happy days, but by smiting the earth with a curse; and in order to buy off their wrath in a

¹ *Records of the Past*, vol. vi. pp. 100-1.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 137-9.

³ Bunsen, *Egypt*, vol. v. p. 260; Rawlinson, *History of Ancient Egypt*, vol. i. p. 406 seq.

time of calamity, or to keep them from troubling the world, only sacrifices which involved loss or suffering to the offerers could suffice. It was so wherever the great religion of Assyria or Baalism prevailed in any organised form. For Baalism was nature-worship in its most extravagant expression, based upon the idea of solar energy in its destructive and productive phases. Whether as Moloch or Melcar or Kronos or as the fearful fire-god of the Carthaginian or the Celt—whose worship has left many memorials of its horrors in our folk-lore and customs—Bel was a monstrous deity, who could only be kept from doing evil to men by being constantly gorged with hecatombs of bulls and of goats and the blood of thousands of rams. “Round his altars upon the tops of the mountains, or by the stones of the brooks, his priests danced with frantic shouts, cutting themselves with knives, scorching their limbs with fire.” Human sacrifice—offered not with the savage’s intent of slaying the god for the profit of his worshipper, but as it was offered by the chosen chieftains of the Danai in Aulis,¹ to turn away anger or “to please the winds”²—was everywhere a grim reality.³ Appreciating their own worth as superior to all creatures, men were inclined to offer upon such occasions, not an animal, even the choicest, but one of themselves as the “best of all seeds,” and their own proper representative. Expanding the significance of the ancient Gaulish

¹ Lucretius, *De Rer. Nat.*, i. i. 443, 592.

80-101; Æsch., *Agam.*, 188-210.

³ Herod., ii. 40; Plut., *De Sup.*,

² *Æn.*, ii. 116; Lucan, *Pharsal.*, ii. 7; Porph., *De Abstin.*, ii. 55.

maxim, "*pro vitâ hominis nisi hominis vita reddatur, non posse aliter deorum immortalium numen placari arbitrantur*,"¹ the victims burned upon the altars or at the tophests of the horrible fire-god, were not slaves or prisoners captured in war, but, as annually in Carthage,² the choicest children of the noblest houses. Among the wild inhabitants of pre-Christian Europe great was the rejoicing when the lot which decided the victim for the yearly sacrifice fell upon the bravest soldier in the army, or upon the chief of the tribe.³

In all these religions the idea of substitution, of vicarious sacrifice, is profoundly rooted. The victim, whether animal or human, took the place of the offerers, for whose members its several parts were considered equivalent—

Cor pro corde, precor, pro fibris sumite fibras.
Hanc animam vobis pro meliore damus.⁴

On occasions of great peril, when disaster threatened or had actually fallen upon the nation, the propitiatory sacrifice was considered more efficacious when the substitution was voluntary; and so, in most ancient religions we find traditions of individual acts of self-immolation and devotion in which the foremost man, like the Œdipus of Sophocles, goes straight to his own ruin, that he might bear as king and priest his people's woe; or, like Decius in Roman story, "*Omnes minas periculaque ab Deis superis inferisque in se unum vertit*."⁵

¹ Cæsar, *De Bell. Gall.*, vi. 16.

⁴ Ovid, *Fasti*, vi. 161-2.

² Diod. Siculus, xx. c. 14; Euseb., *Præp. Evang.*, iv. 16.

⁵ *Œdipus Rex*, 58 seq.; Livy, *Hist.*, viii. 9, 10; Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.*, iii. c. 6.

³ Witsius, *De Theol. Gent.*, p. 683.

In China a pious king is reported to have offered himself in a time of universal calamity as the substitute for his people, and, after earnest supplication that his vicarious offering would be accepted in place of his perishing subjects, he was actually immolated.¹ More remarkable still is the Phœnician tradition, referred to by Eusebius,² of the ancient king or "Il" who, when the realm was endangered by a very disastrous war, took his only son, and after investing him with the robes and insignia of royalty, sacrificed him upon an altar specially prepared for the purpose. In the light of what had transpired on Calvary at least a generation before the fragments of Sanchoniathon were being translated by Philo Biblyos, from whom Eusebius quoted the story, and especially in the light of the interpretation which the apostles had given of the crucifixion of Christ, we need not wonder that the tradition of the offering of a son—ἀγαπητόν, μονογενῆ; as λύτρον, by way of satisfaction; τιμωροῖς δαίμοσι, to avert the vengeance of God, and to prevent general ruin ἀντὶ τῆς πάντων φθορᾶς—should have powerfully affected theologians in all ages of the Church, as a type from the heart of heathendom prefiguring what all men needed in God's loving sacrifice of His willing Son for their redemption.³

¹ Legge, *Religions of China*, p. 54; Martin's *Hist. of Sinitism*, book iii. p. 75.

² *Præp. Evang.*, bks. i. vi. vii. x.

³ Bryant, *Observations*, pp. 286, 292; Magee, *Discourses and Dissertations on Atonement and Sacrifice*, 5th edition, vol. i. pp. 372-80.

For discussion as to genuineness of the Sanchoniathon fragments, see Renan, *Memoire sur Sanchoniathon*, Paris, 1858; Lobeck, *Aglaophanos*, ii. 1273; Baudissin, Article in *Herzog Real-Enc.*, xii. pp. 364-72; Movers, *Die Phönizien*, pp. 99, 116.

Far more remarkable than what Byrant describes as this "most wonderful piece of history" and this striking resemblance to the one great and final sacrifice, is the approach in thought and feeling towards it indicated in the poetry and philosophy of Greece. In the trilogies of the oldest tragic poet, the polytheism of the people—the old Homeric gods, each with his own delegated sovereignty under the supremacy of Zeus—is represented. But the gods of Æschylos are very different from the gods of Homer. They are no longer capricious, jealous of man's prosperity, outside the pale of moral obligation; they are terrible and mysterious beings, like the "mighty ones" of Egypt. Tormenting doubts as to whether might (*κράτος*) in them was only might, or might and justice (*δίκη*) in unison, and as to whether the conflict between man and their superior might as expressed in nature would end in man's destruction, or in some distant reconciliation of the two, are freely set forth in the *Prometheus*. With true insight it has been observed that in the great Titan enduring the wrath of Zeus "there is embodied, on the one hand, that law of sacrifice which has made all the great benefactors and teachers of mankind achieve their task and win their victory through suffering; and on the other, the truth that the first result of the possession of enlarged powers is a new self-assertion, the spirit of independence and rebellion against the control of a divine order, the 'many inventions' that tend to evil, an outburst of impiety and lawlessness, needing the discipline of punishment before it can be brought round again into

a nobler harmony." "During the process the government under which men live appears stern, arbitrary, and tyrannical. The eagle's fangs rend the heart of the hero Titan who represents the intellect of mankind as a race, the mind which belongs to all in its defiant self-assertion. The struggle and the agony must last till Cheiron comes of his own free will to bear the pains of death and so deliver him."¹ In this great mythos which all thinkers have ranked among the noblest "of the unconscious prophecies of heathendom," one of the profoundest anticipations of an eternal truth, the poet's meaning was probably far lower than his theme. It is plain, however, that his Zeus is no longer "the ancient giant tyrannous and strong, the vengeful ruler of this scorned world,"² sending calamity upon men through sheer envy of their happiness. He protested against such an explanation of the mystery of evil as gross superstition, he referred to it as "an old saw," a belief of very ancient days,³ and he plainly asserted his own conviction that if disaster followed prosperity, it was as the penalty of yielding to its peculiar temptation to become impious and proud. The suffering in man's lot was felt to be the fruit of man's sin, his evil was his guilt. It had its fountain in some offence which might have been avoided, but which once committed did not end with the offender. It descended with accelerating force through successive generations—in which the penalty

¹ Plumptre, *Intro. to translation of Æschylos*, p. lxvii.

Daphne and other Poems, p. 358.

² Fred. Tennyson, "Niobe," in

³ *Agam.*, 470 ; 665-782.

became the parent of sin in an ever-increasing load of guilt, and "the murderous mischief waxed worse and worse," until it fell at last upon the least guilty—upon one innocent in comparison with the first and all other transgressors—who, by penitence, supplication, sacrifice, redeemed his house from the primeval curse.

Sophocles, the greater successor of Æschylos, apprehended even more firmly and enunciated more clearly the operation of this inexorable Nemesis. He believed in the supremacy of the all-pervading power whose laws unchangeably avenged themselves upon the impious. Dwelling invisible and beyond all human ken, he will not explain to perplexed mortals the difficulties connected with his government.¹ Providence, like human life, was to Sophocles a tale that could not be told, till death was passed. The mystery of suffering, often apparently undeserved, and the evil destiny transmitted from age to age, oppressed him; but he was careful to note the connexion between the original madness—the *πρώταρχος ἄτη*²—with faults of some kind in each sufferer which called for correction and for profitable chastening.³ The disciplinary value of suffering, however, was not wholly penal, but educative. In the case of the wise, afflictions were overruled for good, and out of evil good was brought. To both poets the dread ministers of the divine retribution, the relentless Erinnyes, could be transformed after the appeasement of their wrath into the benevolent (*εὐφρονας*) Eumenides,

¹ *Æd. Rex*, 865-871. ² Æschylos, *Agam.*, 1163. ³ *Æd. Rex*, 1432, 1472.

σεμναὶ θεαί.¹ Penalty meekly accepted would purify and refine. Under submission to Zeus Soter—"the consummating (τέλειος) saviour god, in whom the opposition between the serene gods of the worlds above and the gloomy powers of the realms below is equalised and tempered down,"²—the παθήματα would become μαθήματα, and "calm wisdom gained by sorrow profits much,"³

"Zeus who men in wisdom's path doth train,
Who to our mortal race
Hath given the fixed law that pain is gain."⁴

It is important to note that in the thought of both poets—and indeed of all men of profound feeling among the ancient Greeks—consciousness of moral discipline, chastisement overruled to their profit by supreme power (κράτος) and justice (Δίκη), was not sufficient to sustain the sufferer under the trial of his affliction. There still rested upon him the burden of his guilt, and from that guilt he could not deliver himself either by the payment of fine, or by the endurance of penalty. Emancipation was possible, but it could only be obtained by expiation and lustration wrought by the blood of sacrifice, and by water poured or sprinkled over the penitent through the mediation of another. To fulfil such an office to a suppliant (ἰκέτης) who generally came from far, fleeing from the vengeance of man, and from the fierce wrath of the dreadful Erinnyes roused by his crime—making

¹ *Eumenides*, 361, 993.

³ *Eumenides*, 495.

² Müller's *Dissert. on the Eumenides*, p. 222.

⁴ *Agamemnon*, 170.

humble entreaty (*προστροπή*) that by rites of atonement (*ίλασμοί*) the Erinnyes might be appeased, and that by rites of purification (*καθαρισμοί*) he might be cleansed from blood-guiltiness and restored to society—was the greatest kindness which a man could show to a friend.

This doctrine as to the efficacy of these expiatory and purificatory ceremonies is said to be traceable to Epimenides, who seventy years before the time of Æschylos had been summoned from Crete to Athens to expiate the wrath which a great crime had brought upon the land. This he is said to have done by turning loose some white and some black sheep from the Areopagus, and by sacrificing them to the gods before whose altars they lay down. If they rested where no altar was, one was erected to the unknown divinity who seemed to desire the sacrifice.¹ At the same time he had a temple erected to the venerable goddesses (the Erinnyes) and two unhewn stone pillars set up in the Areopagus as perpetual reminders that the evil powers that vexed the city, and which must never again be invoked, were outrage (*ὑβρις*) and shamelessness (*ἀναιδεία*).² Making allowance for the legends that have gathered round his memory, the leading ideas of his teaching are unquestionably reflected in these ceremonies, which were recognised and enforced under the sacred law of Athens. Its decree was fixed and unbending that the shedder of blood must be outlawed and not allowed to

¹ Müller, *Dissert.*, p. 171 ;
Plumptre, *Introd. to Æschylos*,
p. xxix.

² Clem. Alex., *Protrep.*, 22.
Cicero, *De Leg.* II., ii.

converse with men, till, at the hand of one who frees from blood, "the purple stream from yearling swine runs o'er him," as, covered with clay, daubed over with filth, standing in some cases on the skin of the victim, he confessed his crime and made his supplication.

Belief in the efficacy of this atonement for blood, and of this purification of the blood-shedder, was universal in ancient Greece, and it lasted long. Plutarch, indeed, stigmatises the rites as *ῥυπαρὰ ἀγνεῖαι*, and Plato indignantly denounced them as immoral, but they were practised and believed in by intelligent heathens long after the coming of Christ. It is well known that such a cultured Roman as Julian the apostate, though scoffing at the cleansing power of Christ's atonement, sought cleansing and peace of mind by submitting to the filthy ceremony of the *Taurobolium*.¹ The atoning sacrifice as *ἱλασμὸς* was offered to appease the gloomy divinities of the under-world, and to satisfy the outraged Erinnyes. The celestial divinities were not propitiated, but Apollo demanded *καθαρμοί*, purification by blood and water, as fitting the penitent for entrance upon a new life of righteousness. The distinction between the atoning and the cleansing rites, clearly explained by Müller,² is interesting as giving the ideas originally expressed by words which, used also in the New Testament, have occupied and exercised Christian theologians from the

¹ For description, see Thomson's *Bampton Lecture on the Atonement*, p. 266.

² *Dissertations on the Eumenides*, pp. 148-65.

earliest down to the present times. Æschylos dwells with manifold delight upon the ceremony of supplication and atonement. Sophocles seems to make more of the ceremony of purification, the pouring of water as that which cleanses and renews, and insists upon the necessity for true repentance, and for short but earnest prayer for forgiveness and help. But both poets are firmly convinced that man could not be his own redeemer, working out his own salvation. He must seek emancipation through others, and with marvellous approximation to the thought that underlies the mystery of the Atonement, Sophocles makes Œdipus entreat another to take his place—who will make the vicarious lustration in the fulness of a self-devoted love—

“For one soul working in the strength of love
Is mightier than ten thousand to atone.”¹

Although this thought is well described as “standing without parallel to it in the literature of antiquity,”² these unconscious prophecies of the fountain which Jehovah would open for sin and for uncleanness, and of the Redeemer who would vanquish the gods of Greece—even as Kronos had been vanquished by Zeus, because though mightier than they, he “was to be the bearer, not the builder of man’s woes”—have abundant parallels in the writings of other noble Greeks. Let it suffice that

¹ *Œd. Col.*, 40; 466-492; *chylus und Sophocles*, p. 87; 496-500. Plumptre, *Sophocles*, *Introd.* p.

² Dronke, *Die Religion und sittlichen Vorstellungen des Æs-* lxxxvi.

we refer to Plato, who had clear insight into the wants of humanity as needing salvation. In Aristotle this confession is profound and searching, as when he says in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, that "not one of the moral virtues springs up in us by nature." To Plato, evil was not an excrescence in man's nature which might be rubbed off; it was in the heart, the very fountain of life. St. Paul's conception of the struggle between "the flesh and the spirit," St. John's assertion that "the whole world lieth in wickedness," almost seem to have been anticipated by Plato. Man's evil was the result of sin, in which all men were involved, and for which each one is responsible, and no salvation from evil was possible unless by redemption from sin and reunion with deity. This could never be accomplished by man himself. Plato had no conception of a Divine Redeemer, of a God who could suffer and die for His creatures. This was a void in the theology of Greece, which neither Plato nor any other thinker could supply. But he has said some strange things about "heavenly powers" which operate in and upon earthly life, by the media of ideas, which, in themselves eternal, are really the saviours of the world.¹ Believing in the possibility of salvation, he yet could only hope for it from super-human intervention. He was the first and only heathen philosopher who, renouncing all faith in any scheme of salvation by works, looked for the redemption of the world to a divine power existing in it and operating towards this end. It is true that there are many non-

¹ *Legg.*, i. 644 ; *Theat.*, 177 ; *Gorg.*, 492 ; *Rep.*, vi. 500, and viii. 555.

Christian and even antichristian *dicta* in his teaching; and specially antipodal to the Gospel idea of the glorification of the Son of Man is his idea of the glorification of humanity. But in awakening and deepening the sense of the necessity for reconciliation with Deity, and in strengthening the hope of reconciliation, he prepared the way for the Gospel. He knew not, for he could not know, to what end Divinity was shaping his work, and at the best he saw dimly and prophesied only in part. His utterances of the truth, like all unconscious predictions of heathendom, are indeed *disjecta membra*, and as we read them we feel that we are "waiting with Ezekiel, till, at the Lord's bidding, the scattered bones are joined into a body, to which the Holy Spirit gives life." In the light of the great consummation, however, we see from what source they proceeded, and to what end they were made to tend.¹

It may safely be averred as a conclusion from our survey of the highest beliefs of the ancient world, that the scattered elements of truth found here and there in them can only be satisfactorily harmonised in the Catholic faith of Christendom. And therefore these guesses and fragments sufficiently indicate a Divine purpose for all mankind, which even the Hebrew seers could only predict and not display. We see currents flowing from out of the midst of heathendom to meet the purer and fuller tides of Christianity. We see

¹ Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. i. p. 171; Ackerman, *The Christian Element in Plato*, pp. 204, 207, 238, 248.

heathendom preparing the way, supplying the moulds and the language for the reception and distribution of Christian truth. Even its aberrations from the truth testify to necessities, which it could not satisfy, and also to capacities to receive what it could not produce. There is something pathetic and prophetic in the fact that most of these religions feed the hope of a higher good than they know. The Greek and Roman cults have vanished long ago, for they have served their purpose, and of the heathen religions that survive, not one is satisfied that what is perfect is come to them. Hinduism expects its final Avatar; Buddhism waits for another Buddha; Mazdeism, in ruins, looks out for the fulness of time when Soshiant will restore all things, and though perhaps not speedily, yet eventually they will all be gathered up in the sure hope of Judaism, whose Messiah having really come, is fulfilling all things.

LECTURE IV

SACRIFICE AS EXHIBITED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Patriarchal and Mosaic Sacrifices

WITHOUT the New Testament the elaborate ceremonial, and even much of the doctrine contained in the Old Testament, would be enigmatical. The gospels and epistles supply the interpretation; and by their light we discover that the law and the prophets represent an economy which prepared the way for the after dispensation, which, as only in course of proceeding, is even yet inadequately comprehended by us. In like manner, the Old Testament throws an interpreting light upon the religious beliefs and practices of all mankind. Separating what is accidental from what is essential, it gathers up and gives vitality and completeness to every element of universal religion in them; and, just as Christianity spiritualises what of Judaism it has adopted, so the Old Testament refines and purifies what of other religions it has assumed.

It is a gross misconception of the old economy that all its ordinances and rites were formally and exter-

nally unlike those of former times, and of nations bordering with Palestine. Many of the traditions, customs, and ceremonies described in the Bible are similar to those which are exhibited in the books of other religions. Coincidences between them are found to multiply every year, and yet these affect the originality of the Hebrew Bible as little as the resemblances between heathen and Christian moral precepts affect the originality of the Gospels. The originality is displayed in the use to which materials which are common to all have been put ;¹ for working with such it is undeniable that the Hebrew authors have produced a very different result. Under their handling, traditions and rites which in heathendom have only a cosmic significance are found to be always purified from old associations, and inspired with new ethical and religious ideas. Even when apparently accommodating themselves to popular notions, it is always to use them in illustration of spiritual truths, or to enforce high moral precepts. In the Bible we find no custom or rite that was essentially - or exclusively heathen ; we find several forbidden which were harmless, because they might prove a temptation and a snare, and we find that those which have been preserved have acquired quite a new significance, so that though in form they seem

¹ "The Biblical historians were dependent for their materials on ordinary human sources ; their inspiration shows itself in the application which they made of them, and the spirit with which

they infused them." — Driver, *Sermons on the Old Testament*, p. 5 ; Lenormant, *Les Origines de l'Histoire*, vol. i. p. xviii. seq., p. 106 seq., ed. 1880.

to be identical, their real purpose is essentially antagonistic.¹

In fact the Hebrew Bible begins at a much higher point than the scriptures of other religions ever reached. Polytheism, under the treatment of the higher class of minds, was resolved into pantheism, and in some rare instances into theism. The Hebrew Scriptures start from monotheism; they postulate a personal Deity, distinct from and superior to the universe which He has created and governs. This belief, of which tradition makes Abraham the first prophet, is not in Scripture represented as "the outcome of a Semitic peculiarity of instinct."² The language which the descendants of Abraham spoke was fundamentally that of the Canaanites whom they dispossessed, and it was very closely related to that of the Assyrians who conquered and led them captive. But the religion of Abraham, both in form and faith, was not only distinct from but essentially antagonistic to that of the land which he forsook, that of Palestinian tribes among whom he sojourned, and that of Assyria which "as the rod of God's wrath" was to punish his apostate seed. The Semitic disposition in all these instances was peculiarly prone to polytheism, and by the many cults of Semitic polytheism the Hebrews were always very powerfully impressed. Down to the time of their overthrow and captivity

¹ Kalisch, *Commentary on Genesis*, p. 87 seq.; Simon, *The Redemption of Man*, p. 152.

² Renan, *Nouvelles Considérations sur le caractère générale des peuples Sémitiques*: Paris, 1859.

they were continually falling away into it. Monotheism therefore as held by the Hebrews was never free from the influence of debasing superstition. It was a belief capable both of expansion and purification, and Scripture in recording the prolonged and severe training under which a people who actually struggled against it were separated from heathenism and educated to purer apprehension of truth; so far from excluding the ideal development in religion, offers itself as a remarkable example of it.¹ Although, however, the original conception became gradually more distinct and more refined, it was never exchanged for another. Even when freed from all that was local in the original faith, the God of Moses, the God of the Prophets, and even of Christ Himself was essentially the God of Abraham.²

Hebrew monotheism is a puzzle to those who would evolve the catholic religion of the descendants of Abraham from a worship as ethic and tribal as that of any local Bel in the many forms of Baalism. They endeavour to educe it from henotheism, or monolatry, by a long process in which the narrowest conceptions were expanded, and the most superstitious rites were reformed, into the faith and worship of the post-exilic period.³ It does not fall within the scope of this lecture to discuss theories which have been very fairly and effectively handled by one of my learned pre-

¹ Kalisch, *Com. on Genesis*, p. 185.

² Müller, *Physical Religion*, p. 220, 1.

³ Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*,

vol. i. p. 223 seq.; Kuenen, "National Religions," *Hibbert Lecture*, p. 118 seq.; Montefiore, *Hibbert Lecture*, 1892, Lecture I.

decessors, Professor Robertson; but I unhesitatingly adhere to his conclusion, that the origination of the monotheistic conception in the prophets of the eighth century, would be as great a puzzle as its origination in the days of Abraham. By no process of development can we evolve any of the Belim into Jehovah, the lofty and Holy One inhabiting eternity, ruling wisely in heaven and justly upon earth. The prophetic writings of the eighth century are unaccountable unless as the outgrowth of a long previous course of reflection upon higher than heathen beliefs. If Hebrew religion started from the idea, however crudely apprehended, of the unity of God, the Creator and Ruler of the world, then the truths proclaimed by Amos and Isaiah, and the clearer perceptions of these truths expressed by Jeremiah and Ezekiel, are natural developments of the original faith. If otherwise, the prophets are personalities as inexplicable as Abraham himself, and their teaching is indeed "as great a psychological and moral miracle as any of the miracles recorded in Scripture."¹

We do not get rid of the difficulty by bringing the origin of monotheism a little nearer to ourselves. The monotheistic idea in whatever age it emerged was miraculous, or, as described by Prof. Max Müller long ago,² it was "a special Divine revelation." This is the theory clearly formulated and advanced in the Bible. In it, we are confronted at the very outset by the difference

¹ Robertson, *The Early Religion of Israel*, "first edition," p. 165.

² *Semitic Monotheism: Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. i. p. 373.

between natural and supernatural religion—between general and special revelation. The immense superiority of the Bible to all other sacred books is universally admitted; for the more they are examined and compared with it, the more clearly shines out the fact, that “though the belief in Deity in some form or another is universal in humanity, saving knowledge of Deity is only to be found in the Hebrew Scriptures.” While every other religion, however pure it may have been in some stage of its history, inevitably declined into superstition, and was eventually abandoned by the higher class of minds, the religion of the Hebrews, against their natural disposition, went on developing in its higher representatives purer faith and worthier worship. The authors of the Hebrew Bible believed that this was due to progressive Divine revelations of the truth otherwise inaccessible to the human mind. The Bible professes to record the unfolding of that revelation—special as distinguished from the general—originally communicated in nature and in the constitution of man. The Bible implies and demands the acknowledgment of this universal and primeval revelation, but it will not allow us to regard its own revelation as the natural outgrowth of it. So the religion of the Bible is not the religion of the natural man in a higher stage of development. It is a new and distinct dispensation designed to educate man’s spiritual instincts, purify his natural conceptions and beliefs, and prepare him by ever enlarging disclosures for that manifestation in Christ which has sufficed ever since to sustain him in

his conflict with doubt respecting his origin and his destiny.¹

We are not involved in the discussion of the various theories as to the authorship and construction of the Pentateuch. We examine it, just as we do any other sacred books, in order to ascertain what are the religious conceptions and beliefs contained in it, and what is the purpose which it was designed to serve. It is a composite book, in which at least two streams of narrative, clearly definable by phraseology, style, and spirit, are combined;² but no one will call it a collection of fragments thrown carelessly together. It is an organic production, conceived upon one design, and exhibiting a natural relation of all the parts to each other and to the whole. That it contains very ancient materials all will admit, and when we apprehend how, and to what high ends, these have been manipulated, we feel that the man or set of men "who devised and carried out to so logical a conclusion the plan of it, if tried by the standard of human genius, must have been great men." They have neither disclosed extraordinary secrets, nor satisfied speculative curiosity; they have attempted neither to write history, nor to expound science, in the sense in which these things are understood by us. Their narratives often refer to insignificant persons and events never alluded to by the ordinary historian, and they wrote for a people to

¹ Comp. Boedder, *Natural Theology*, pp. 2, 3, quoted by Prof. Dickson in his examination of Prof. M. Müller's *Refer-*

ences to Miracles, pp. 10, 11.

² Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, third edition, pp. 109-114.

whom scientific explanations of physical problems would have been unintelligible. Their language is popular and poetic, but their purpose is that of the prophet, for they have recorded the first unfoldings of an ever-enlarging revelation of a Divine purpose of mercy for all mankind. So in the very beginning of their work human evil and Divine good, man's sin and God's salvation confront each other. These two facts are constantly kept before us, and round them as the two poles of an axis the whole Bible revolves. Its one theme appears to be the misery of alienation from God by reason of human sin, the blessedness of reconciliation to God, by means of Divine grace. "From the sin of the first man to the entire ruin of the Hebrew nation, there is recorded a dark unbroken tale of evil; but, above it, unbroken to the coming of Christ, there is a series of announcements of salvation which commences at the very point at which the development of evil is recorded to have begun,"¹ and to make clear to us the foundation and origin of this salvation, and to indicate one or two stages in the revelation of it, the Pentateuch was produced.

So though, like some other sacred books, it begins with a cosmogony, it is in order to enunciate truth which had eluded the grasp of the Hindoo and Chaldean sages, yea of the wisest men in all other religions. To them matter was eternal, the material was confounded with the spiritual universe, and gods and men and all things were evolving from, or being resolved into, the surging

¹ Ackerman, *The Christian Element in Plato*, p. 219.

deep of chaos.¹ In the Bible, matter in all its forms is the creature of One who is eternally distinct from it, and who, as its self-existent and supreme controller, moulds and disposes it to His own purposes. In like manner it carefully separates the truth of the creation of man in the image after the likeness of his Maker, from the conception universal in heathendom of man as physically descended from deity. Then laying hold of one of the universal institutions of mankind, the Sabbath—which, though associated in other religions with lunar phases, may correctly be said to date from creation, seeing that the necessity for it is a fact in the constitution of man—it connects with it the great truths of a completed creation, and of the necessity for constant recreation for man's spiritual nature, and so "it makes the Sabbath a great educator of the Hebrew people and of mankind." Similarly treated is the other primeval and more extensively diffused institution in which we are interested. Sacrifice as we have seen is in all religions taken for granted as a natural part of the economy of life, for it is as much assumed that men will worship God by sacrifice as that they will worship Him at all. In the Pentateuch the universal fact of sacrifice begins to be divinely interpreted, and we begin to apprehend how and for what ends it has been enlisted in the service of God. In all other religions it is efficacious as having power with the gods to prevail; it originates in man and is offered to deity;

¹ Schræder, *Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament* (1883), on Gen. i.; *Records of the Past* (second series), 1888, i. p. 133 seq.

but from the Pentateuch we learn that sacrifice is effectual, not from any virtue in it, or in them who administer it, but only as a divinely sanctioned means of grace through which God mediates to those who have faith in Him, His forgiveness and blessing.

It is significant that in the Pentateuch sacrifice meets us in immediate connexion with the record of a fall from a state of loving, self-forgetful communion with his Creator, due to man's own perversity. Realising his alienation because of sin, man everywhere and always is afraid of and would hide himself from any manifestation of God. In God's presence he is convicted of sin by his very devices to cover his shame on account of it. This is the doctrine of Genesis, which universal experience has confirmed; and intimately associated with this doctrine is another peculiar to the Bible, namely, that though man has alienated himself from his Creator, the Creator abides eternally faithful to His rebellious creatures. In language symbolic and hieroglyphic, the Creator is described as instructing man that part of the penalty due to his faithlessness must be endured. It is required for his correction, so as to render compact with evil impossible to a nature created originally good. But to encourage him to continue the conflict with evil, final victory over it is promised; and as a pledge of the Divine forgiveness and help, the Lord covers his shame, not by the fig-leaves of his own devising, but by "*coats of skin.*"

The language is not only metaphorical but anthropomorphic, for because of the limitations of human

nature and language, the truth to be conveyed would otherwise be unintelligible by us. There is no anthropomorphism however in the truth itself. God is represented as meeting a want which man had attempted but failed to supply. Man had succeeded in clothing his nakedness, in finding a covering for his body, but he could not succeed in covering his shame because of sin. Neither instinct nor reason could show him a way of quieting his accusing conscience. That was peculiarly God's act, and any action of man's required for its accomplishment was the result of a Divine suggestion made to a creature formed to know God and to receive communications from Him. The expression, "God covered upon them," is remarkable, for it constantly recurs under the Law to describe the design of offerings which were specially intended to atone for guilt. The inference seems logical, and almost inevitable, that the authors of the Pentateuch desire to teach that the first dawning upon the human conscience of the truth that with God is forgiveness, was coeval with the sacrifice of innocent life on behalf of the guilty. And so there was not only supplied "a sacrificial language";¹ there was also suggested "a basis of worship" of the unchangeable God by a creature self-condemned for having changed his relation to Him. Man must abandon his own devices for undoing the effects of his sin and for regaining his lost fellowship with God. He must adopt the Divine method, and follow the Divine leading to whatever consummation it tended. Relief for a guilty

¹ Fairbairn, *Typology*, vol. i. pp. 440-45.

conscience could not be obtained in any of the ways in which man is prone to seek it. By no act of his own, not even the substitution of the fruit of his body, can he find a covering for the sin of his soul. In all such endeavours the life offered was involved in the common transgression and penalty. Peace of mind would only ensue from faith in a sinless life substituted for a sinful one; in the clothing of innocence for the covering of shame.¹

If this be the truth which the authors of Genesis sought to exhibit, it follows naturally that the first sacrifice recorded by them should bear distinctly impressed upon it the Divine approbation. It is referred to in the epistle to the Hebrews, where we have clearly stated the Christian interpretation of its significance. It would be very hazardous to assert that it was so regarded in primeval times, but we may safely conclude that when the Pentateuch in its present form was first produced, and probably in the very ancient times when the fragments preserved in the early chapters of Genesis found

¹ Compare Cave, *Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice*, p. 39.

In some heathen sacrifices the skin of the victim was used to clothe the idol, and sometimes also the worshipper, so that he might be invested with its efficacy and have its life identified with his own. Professor Robertson Smith finds in such heathen rites the origin of the metaphors, "robe of righteousness," "garments of salvation" (*Religion of*

the Semites, pp. 404, 440 *seq.*). The authors of the Hebrew Bible would not assume so polytheistic an idea in their spiritual religion. They founded the metaphors on the official attire of the priests, pure white linen without any leopard skin, such as was worn by the Egyptian priesthood. From the same source St. John derived his figure of the white robes of the saints, for white is the livery of heaven, the symbol of holiness.

their way into the stream of universal tradition, the belief prevailed that a sacrifice presented after the manner and in the spirit of Abel's was acceptable to God. Of that method or way of approaching to God in worship it could be said, as it was said of the Sabbath, "the Lord sanctified it and blessed it." Turning the Divine suggestion of forgiveness into a ground of personal obligation and privilege, Abel brought his offering. Interpreted by later legislation, it could not be classified among the sin-offerings (*chata-ath*), nor among the offerings of consecration (*oloth*), nor among the peace-offerings (*shelamim*), which were in part sacramental. It was eucharistic (*mincha*), but it expressed the thankfulness of a sinful and penitent man. It was the only offering by which he could indicate his sense of helplessness and sinfulness, and in which he could embody his appeal to the faithfulness of his Creator, to whose fellowship he longed to be restored. The New Testament comment upon the action was that "by faith," that is, in trustful surrender to God's majesty and mercy, he "offered a much more excellent sacrifice than Cain."¹ He confided in God so thoroughly, and he longed so earnestly to be made one with Him, that though he may not have conceived of his victim as his representative, he yet, in it or with it, surrendered himself to God. Now, even according to the narrative, Cain did not offer in faith but in discontent. Though the act was religious, he was influenced in performing it by a sinful feeling which was waiting at the door of his heart for

¹ Hebrews xi. 4.

its opportunity against him, as a wild beast lurks for its prey. The interpretation given in the Talmud is that he did not offer his best as Abel piously offered his choicest, but that, taking without selection whatever fell to his hand, he rendered rather than offered it. It was the sacrifice of a heathen, who expected something in return, and was offended because it was not given. The offerer was unacceptable, for he had in him none of the spirit of true worship, and so his offering, as expressing no self-surrender, could not be divinely acknowledged.¹

All through the Pentateuch there is a silent but powerful condemnation of heathen rites and beliefs in the contrasts which are designedly presented to them by ordinances which are exhibited in it as divinely authorised and sealed. So, against the rejected heathen sacrifice of Cain, there is set forth the accepted sacrifice of Abel. It may be said to summarise the faith which underlay the Hebrew religion, and which made sacrifice indispensable in its worship. It is the truth propounded and maintained by the prophets and psalmists,² who, while denouncing the sacrifices of the wicked as abominable, and while railing at hypocrites who dared to substitute offerings for personal devotion, always upheld pure sacrifice as a very valuable means of grace. Our Lord Himself acknowledged the sacrificial law as binding. He partook of the Passover, commanded the healed lepers to offer the sacrifice required for their cleansing, and told his disciples to seek reconciliation with each other

¹ Cave, *Script. Doct. of Sacr.*,
p. 49 ; Maurice, *Sacrifice*, p. 14.

² Psalms li. 20, 21 ; Isaiah
lvi. 7 ; Jeremiah xxxiii. 17, 18.

before bringing their gifts to God's altar. The Kabbalists taught that the advent of Messiah would render sacrifice unnecessary, for He would effect all that could be obtained by means of it, but till then, when reverently and fervently offered, it effected much. Without a proper sacrifice God could not be worshipped becomingly. Without trustful surrender to the Divine mercy in the sacrificer, his sacrifice, however precious, would be worthless, but with this surrender it availed to please God and satisfy his own conscience. So in the beginning of the Hebrew Bible we read that "to Abel *and to his offering* God had respect," and in the close of it, it is predicted of the Messenger of the Covenant that he "shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, *that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness*. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years." ¹

¹ Malachi iii. 4.

According to Magee (*Dissert. and Discourses*, vol. i. pp. 53, 126, 259) Cain, the first-born of the Fall, exhibits the first fruits of his parents' disobedience in the arrogance and self-sufficiency of reason. "He is the first deist displaying in his rejection of the revelation the same spirit which rejected the sacrifice of Christ, on the ground that confession of sin and repentance from it is all that is required for reconciliation." It is a fact clearly established by many quotations from Hebrew and heathen religious literature,

that if deity be pleased with simple repentance, no man has ever been able by repentance to appease conscience and overcome his remorse or condemnation of himself. At the same time, though man has everywhere attempted by expiatory rites to do so, the result has universally and invariably been that expressed by Porphyry, "that there was wanting some effectual method of delivering men's souls which no sect of philosophy has ever yet found." (Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, Bk. x. ch. xxxii. ; Outram, *De Sacrificiis*, ch. xx.)

The first recorded sacrifice is the prelude to the more definite and elaborate types of sacrifice in Mosaic and Levitical worship. The very next mention of sacrifice in the Bible seems more clearly to exhibit its original intention. Noah's sacrifice, consisting of selections from all animals afterwards recognised by the Law as fit for sacrifice, was offered upon an altar, and consumed by fire; whereas Abel's was brought "before the Lord." It was not personal like Abel's, for it represented the sacrifice of the remnant of the whole human race that had experienced a wonderful redemption from universal judgment. In Noah and his house, humanity had been saved, and so from a sense of overwhelming debt, they brought abundance of offerings. Deeply sensible however of unworthiness, and conscious of the evil propensities of a nature which they had inherited and shared with those who had perished, they sacrificed after a manner which seemed to anticipate the ritual of the sin-offering under the Law. Thus, although in the strict sense of the word no sacrifice of atonement is traceable in patriarchal times, it may be correctly said that this sacrifice of thanksgiving "exhibits an elementary and symbolic confession of the necessity for it."¹ And naturally so; for it was offered by those who having seen the severity of the Divine judgment upon sin, drew near with confession of sin and with thanksgiving for their experience of the Divine mercy.

As such it is represented as having been graciously

¹ Cave, *Scripture Doctrine of Sacrifice*, p. 46; Maurice, *Sacrifice*, pp. 26-28; Kalisch, *Com. on Genesis*, pp. 178, 179; Oehler, *Old Test. Theol.*, vol. i. p. 394.

accepted. Pleased with their penitence, submission, and devotion, expressed in their sacrifice, the Lord is said to have “smelled a sweet savour”—literally “an odour of rest,” of satisfaction.¹ This expression seems ruder and more archaic than the phrase, “The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering,”² but we may be sure that in the mind of the writer it had nothing of the idolatrous taint which elsewhere attaches to it, when it is said that the gods, like hungry men, were pleased with the fumes of sacrifice. The most refined writers do not hesitate to employ popular sayings to express spiritual conceptions. The same phrase is used by the Hebrew prophets and the Apostles of Christ,³ who must have abominated its old heathen significance. Genesis, like most antique literary works, is more poetic and pictorial than prosaic and historical; and, like all religious books, it must be read with some exercise of the imagination. If we allow the man of science to speak of the “horns of the moon,” and are never misled by a Scriptural reference to the “wings of the morning,” “the eyelids of the dawn,” we need not infer from the use of this phrase that the writer meant to express by it the Divine satisfaction with the materials of the sacrifice.⁴ And so, whereas the narrative of the Fall ends with a *curse* pronounced upon the whole earth, that of the Deluge closes with a *blessing* upon Noah and his seed, and a Divine promise that the earth should no more suffer for the sins of man.⁵

¹ Compare Zephani. iii. 17, expressing Jehovah's delight in Jerusalem, “*He shall rest in His love*”; Gen. viii. 21. ² Gen. iv. 4.

³ Amos v. 21, 22; Phil. iv. 18.

⁴ Kalisch, *Com. Gen.*, pp. 200-1; Lange, *Com. Gen.*, pp. 323-4.

⁵ Gen. viii. 20-22, and ix. 1-7.

In the same popular language, God is represented as having “established a covenant¹ with Noah.” It is the first time we meet the word in Scripture, and we find at once, that while the word is one common to the speech of all men, the idea suggested by it is new and peculiar to the Bible. Elsewhere the invariable idea of a covenant is that of a bargain or compact between parties, fulfilled and expressed by mutual pledges; but in this—the first of several subsequent “covenants” recorded in the Pentateuch—God alone acted, and the pledges were proffered by Him without any demand on His part for a counterpledge. The use of the word marks an enlarged revelation of the Divine nature as merciful and gracious which was communicated to man, and also of the great truth which like a thread of gold runs through all Scripture, binding all the parts of it together, *that the Divine and the human must combine and co-operate in evolving God’s eternal purpose of redemption.* The language employed in describing it was also a revelation of the never-failing Divine government of nature, whose universal constancy is unalterable whether by the wickedness or by the entreaties of men.² This is a truth which directly contradicts the belief which is universal in heathen religions, that the government of the world and of man is unstable, ever changing with the caprice of the powers that control them. Another contradiction to heathen doctrine and practice is found in the renewal in even more energetic terms of the original dominion of man over the animals.³ In the

¹ Genesis ix. 9.² Genesis ix. 10-14.³ Genesis ix. 2-3. ✓

lower religions, the fear of the beasts, as we have seen, is too much upon man, who finds in them his kinsmen and his gods; but the Hebrews made in the image of God—in respect of their moral and spiritual nature—were instructed to use freely for their necessities and for their comfort the beasts which never were created after the likeness of man. All that were wholesome could be slaughtered by any individual without the consent of the community, not only for religious, but for domestic and personal purposes. The importance generally attached among ancient peoples to the blood as the seal of life was recognised, but even here the Hebrew custom was separated from and elevated above the heathen one. For “the flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat,”¹ that is, the eating of not raw flesh but living flesh was rigorously forbidden, afterwards on the penalty of death. The animal had to be slaughtered before it could be eaten, even in sacrifice. Then all slaying of men, whether in anger or for sustenance, or for sacrifice, was declared a crime against the majesty of God,² which would incur the whole severity of the Divine wrath. Man’s blood could only be shed when God’s law of justice demanded it, for only He who originally gave it, had the right to resume or take it away.³

These tacit but unmistakable contradictions to heathen beliefs and rites, surely indicate that the

¹ Genesis ix. 4.

² Genesis ix. 5-6.

³ Trumbull, *The Blood Covenant*, p. 214; Kalisch, *Com. on*

Genesis, p. 217 seq.; Keil and Delitzsch, *Com. on Pent.* i. p. 150 seq.; Kurtz, *Hist. of the Old Covenant*, i. p. 104.

religious institutions of the Hebrews were "not common to all their neighbours," in respect of their essential significance and intention. Even when external resemblances occur, they always cover ideas and purposes directly distinct and contrasted. In Genesis there seems to be reflected the difference between the natural development of the human race, and its supernatural or Divine education. Though starting from a common origin upon a common plane, mankind is represented as having very early diverged into two separate streams, which tended in very different directions. The Cainites, proceeding on the level of nature, and guided by human reason, are seen advancing towards material civilisation;¹ the Sethites yielding their religious instinct to Divine control, are being led upward to purer and more spiritual conceptions of faith and duty.² By the comingling and confusion of the two streams,³ the race is represented as having so degenerated, and as having so corrupted the world, that both had to be purified by universal judgment. In the family of Noah the righteous, human history was renewed, but even after the Deluge, and under a dispensation of mercy, man's proneness to obstinate self-assertion broke out. Nimrod succeeded "the giants" of the older world in his defiant attempt to resist the operation of the law of providence.⁴ Yet in this case the rebels were not divinely destroyed; they were allowed "to shatter themselves against universal and unchangeable order," withdraw themselves

¹ Genesis iv. 16-24.

² Genesis iv. 25, 26.

³ Genesis vi. 1-8.

⁴ Genesis xi. 1-9.

from the "covenant" which in Noah and his seed united mankind with God, and go each his own way to their own quarter and destiny. The alliance, however, between God and the human race is represented as being maintained by a succession of "covenants," or ever-enlarging revelations, individual, national, and universal in their scope. The intention of all of them is to instruct men that salvation from the inherited curse can only be obtained by trustful dependence upon the Divine mercy and hearty acceptance of the Divine method. So while the blessing of material sustenance and natural safety was in Noah assured to all the race, the religious blessing or promise, still very indefinite, was restricted to one man and his seed.¹ It is the first intimation of a Divine purpose of redemption for all mankind, and it was revealed to one, who, in direct contrast to Nimrod—the type of unbelieving humanity—showed himself like Abel and Noah a man of unlimited obedience and trustful submission to God. Abraham therefore became the clear type and head of all the faithful, the first representative of the Church, as divinely elected and saved out of a fallen race, that through it all nations might eventually be called and blessed.²

In the stories concerning this patriarch and his successors, as in a series of word-pictures, there is pre-figured the ideal character and aims of humanity as the people of God. We behold them, not making history nor founding a kingdom like the heroes of other nations, but prophesying in action of the kingdom in

¹ Genesis xii. 2.

² Kalisch, *Com. on Genesis*, p. 329.

which God alone is to rule.¹ So as regards worship, Abraham from the first appears as a builder of altars, at each of which he "*invoked the name of the Lord,*"² thus conjoining with the material mode of worship the higher worship of prayer, of which Seth is said to have been the first prophet.³ He did not scruple to rear them upon the sites of old idolatries,⁴ and under trees associated with very cruel superstitious rites,⁵ for the Divine revelations which he had received at them converted them into sacred spots. In the same toleration of one who was animated by a spiritual religion, and was ready to acknowledge the Divine working in every pure mind, he accepted the blessing of one of a succession of priest-kings who appeared to have ruled in Salem down to the wars of the Conquest. For the blessing was not given in the heathen sense, as dispensed by the arbitrary will of a soothsayer able to curse as Balaam was supposed to do, but in the Bible sense of dependence upon God's will. In respect of religion, Melchizedec occupied towards Abraham a relation similar to that which Jethro of Midian occupied towards Moses. He could invoke prosperity upon the deliverer of his people and his territory in the name of the Giver of it. "Blessed be Abraham of the Most High God, and blessed be the Most High God which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand."⁶

¹ Driver, *Sermons and Discourses on the Old Testament*, p. 127.

² Genesis xii. 8, and xiii. 4.

³ Genesis iv. 26.

⁴ Bethel (Genesis xiii. 3).

⁵ Genesis xii. 6.

⁶ Genesis xiv. 19-20. The author of Genesis may have had in view the *prophetic* import of

Afterwards, in a mood of great depression, he is represented as receiving "the blessing" of the Most High God in a very solemn ceremonial in which sacrifices were offered, not spontaneously as were those of Abel and Noah, but because in answer to his hesitating doubt as to the fulfilment of the Divine promise¹ he had been commanded to prepare them. The victims, limited in number, represented such as were afterwards accounted fit for the altar when the land, then to be guaranteed, was in actual possession of his descendants. They were disposed of according to the ritual of a federal sacrifice, well understood in ancient times. The animals were cut in twain,² and the birds, though not divided, were placed over against each other. In the heathen rites the contracting parties passed between the bisected carcases, indicating what ought to be their penalty if either of them violated the compact. In some cases they joined in eating the sacrifice and in drinking

this meeting of the priest-king of a town destined to be the royal seat of Abraham's seed, and the centre of the worship of Jehovah the Most High. Of its symbolic import as interpreted by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, he of course could have no conception. Through misapprehension of the use made of it in Hebrews from the days of Clement and Cyprian downwards, the interview has been made more mysterious than there is any occasion for. The emphasis in Hebrews is laid upon his titles "King of

righteousness," "King of peace"; also upon his combination of offices as King-priest, and upon the fact that unlike the Levitical priests, whose genealogies were carefully preserved, neither his father's nor his mother's name was recorded. —Clement, *Strom.*, ii. 5, 21, and iv. 25, § 163; Westcott, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 200 *seq.*; *Records of the Past*, vol. v. p. 54; Nicol, *Recent Explorations in Bible Lands*, p. 32.

¹ Genesis xv. 2.

² Jeremiah xxxiv. 18.

blood drawn from each other's veins, in token that through this communion in sacrifice they were mystically one.¹ In this rite the Divine condemnation of all such extravagances was marked by their absence. Though called a covenant, it was really a Divine revelation. So the command to institute it was not "prepare for us," but "take for Me"; and of its consummation, when the symbol of the Divine presence passed between the bisected sacrifices, the patriarch was only a passive spectator. Purified thus from all taint of physiolatry, a very common ancient rite is represented as having been once transferred from the religion of nature to that of a spirit: to allay the doubt of a believing man, and to be the pledge of the Divine faithfulness, and of his own election from the condition of a servant into that of a free agent and friend of God.²

Through the successive revelations which had been made to him, the patriarch had reached a point in his spiritual history, when this clearer and deeper insight into the Divine government was felt to involve him in peculiarly sublime responsibilities. He was the witness to the world of God's accessibility to man, and of man's privilege of freely communicating with Him. And such a vocation carried with it the overpowering

¹ The phrase *Karah-Berith* = "cut a covenant," in Greek ὀρκια τέμνειν," and in Latin *fœdus icere*, or *ferire* or *percutere*, expresses the chief feature of the ceremonial. The drinking of blood, either by itself or mingled with wine, was in many cases an essential part

of the rite.—Herod., ii. 139, and iii. 8. Sallust, *Catil.*, ch. xxii. Valerius Maximus, ix. 11. For many other authorities see Sykes, *Essay on Sacrifice*, p. 235 seq.

² Kurtz, *Hist. of the Old Covenant*, vol. i. p. 235.

obligation of walking in "the light of God," and of conforming his life to God's will.¹ So at once in deep reverence and submission he received in his body the seal of his call.² In the light of what we know as to the relation of the Bible to the primitive institutions of mankind, we need not be surprised to find in circumcision another instance of a widely prevailing rite being adapted, reformed and applied to quite a new and special purpose. The external form was preserved, but it was used to signify and convey religious ideas which, in their purity and comprehensiveness, were absolutely original.³ By circumcision, at puberty the savage was initiated into the immunities and obligations of his tribe through incorporation with its god, that he might be strong with its generative strength. Among the civilised nations of antiquity various reasons were assigned for it at different periods of their history; but in Egypt, the land with which the patriarch and his descendants were most intimately associated, it came to be regarded as the exclusive badge of the proud prestige of the priestly caste. Among the Hebrews the rite was performed at the earliest period at which an infant could endure it; and if the author of Genesis is to be the interpreter of its significance, it was the solemn seal of a covenant in which a man's whole life, from birth to death, was to be brought under the control of the Most High, to whose nature his must conform. The impulse to receive or submit to it must

¹ Genesis xvii. 1.

² Genesis xvii. 9-15.

³ "Commentary on Genesis,"
The Speaker's Com., vol. i. p. 121.

have been very deeply rooted in their national character ; for all mutilation of the body in the service of religion was abhorrent to the Israelites, and yet, while everywhere else it fell into disuse, this rite seemed to acquire as peculiarly sacred a stronger hold over them. In later ages their conquerors, like Antiochus Epiphanes, rigorously but vainly interdicted it, in the hope of weakening thereby their attachment to their faith.¹ Even then it was secretly practised, till it could be publicly practised without restriction. The Jews never forced it upon others, and they condemned as fanatical any attempt to do so ; but they claimed it as the Divine stamp of their sure descent from one who gave himself to the service of God in such a spirit of loving devotion as to win for himself the pre-eminent designation of "the friend of God."²

This title, applied to Abraham in other portions of Scripture,³ though not specially mentioned in the narrative of his life, probably refers to the very ancient and once widely prevailing rite of blood covenant, which still survives over a wide area of the world. In this ceremony, two persons by having tasted blood drawn from each other's veins, or by having mingled it together, were held to have sealed a compact closer than brotherhood, and more binding than marriage. "A

¹ 1 Macc. i. 51-63, ii. 46 ; Joseph., *Antiq.*, xiii. 9, 1.

² The contention as to the essential sanctity of circumcision which divided the Christian Church, though founded upon the truth

of salvation by grace, was probably due to the fact that originally it was the pledge of Abraham's faith.

³ 2 Chron. xx. 7 ; Isaiah xli. 5 ; James ii. 23.

friend," that is a blood-made friend, "sticketh closer than a brother."¹ A friendship so contracted involved a commingling of lives so real as to be described only in the proverb quoted by Aristotle, "one soul in two bodies." The blood-covenanted must give themselves so thoroughly over to and for each other, as to give their lives for each other's defence, and to assume their obligations when dead. If this be the feeling lying at the root of circumcision, it reveals the piety of Abraham as sublimely above the highest level ever attained in ancient religions. The conception of the rite recalls a childish and immature stage of spiritual experience; and yet it implies a worship of God in love—a service of God for God's own sake—unparalleled save by the devotion which made one of the later psalmists say—what never was said by a Greek to his most beautiful god—"Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee."² So, remembering that Abraham was not educated by the revelation of centuries, and that his religious conceptions were not as pure as were those of Isaiah or even of Moses, we shall not be surprised at his willingness in a time of temptation to sacrifice his well-beloved son, who had been born to a highly privileged destiny.

It was an action which, however it was suggested, has nothing at all like it recorded in the history of religion. All other so-called parallels are of sacrifices intended to appease or conciliate offended or capricious deities; but in proof of his limitless devotion to his friend of

¹ Prov. xviii. 24.

² Psalm lxxiii. 25.

friends, this man was ready to offer up a life which—though according to the ideas of the old world it was indeed his to dispose of—was far dearer to him than his own. The author of Genesis very properly refers the origination of the idea to God, for the impulse to such an act of absolute loving surrender could only be drawn from a Divine source. Moreover, according to his narrative, God did so overrule it as to accept what was good and spiritual in it, while yet He condemned and rejected what in it was heathen and superstitious. The resignation and devotion of father and son were accepted, for in their hearts the sacrifice was complete, but the formal act was effectually and for ever repelled. The Hebrews as a people had thus early deeply engraven upon their religion the conviction that neither the direst necessity nor the intensest piety could justify human sacrifice in the worship of God. Yet, in the cruel times of religious persecution, in the spirit of their forefathers' faith, they were enabled to witness the frightful sufferings of their beloved children really immolated for the glory of God. Undoubtedly, therefore, from a very distant past, and from the heart of a very materially expressed religion, was derived the impulse which made Christian fathers consent to the martyrdom of their daughters for the faith ; and which still sustains Christian mothers when their sons are sacrificed in battle for the defence of their country. It was neither St. Paul nor Isaiah nor Moses who was the first preacher of the truth that we must be ready at the call of duty to yield our dearest treasures of

affection in the love of God ; it was Abraham who, at what he believed to be the call of God, withheld not his son—his only son.¹

Thus in the forefront of our Bible, clearer than was ever given in the typical sacrifices of the law, or even in the predictions of the prophets, we have a foreshadowing—"an analogue rather than a type"—of God's supreme sacrifice for man. In the light of Calvary we see how naturally it fits into this place in the history of revelation, and how, through the shining of this foregleam, the sacrifices of the law, and the ordinances which were written for our instruction, become intelligible and significant to us. Our Lord said once, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day : and he saw it, and was glad."² In a very true sense he did see it when the truth flashed in upon his soul, that by no sacrifice of his own, not even of his beloved son, could he attain to that oneness with God which he longed for. What he really apprehended in that eternal moment of perfect surrender and consequent illumination, only Christ, who used the words, could tell. In Christ, however, we can see that the prophetic significance of one utterance of the patriarch, which, like many such, may have soared far beyond his meaning, has been amply fulfilled. The "Lord" did "provide a Lamb for an offering," and in "the mount of the Lord it was seen,"³ that He who spared the son of His friend, spared not His only begotten and well-beloved son, who gave up Himself for

¹ Stanley, *History of Jewish Church*, vol. i. pp. 45-51.

² John viii. 56.

³ Genesis xxii. 8, 14.

our sakes. He heard the cry in the agony, "Father, if it be possible," and yet He suffered Him to make His soul an offering for sin, to the end that a race, alienated because of sin, might through the power of this passion of Divine love, be vanquished and transformed into friends, all one in the Son, as He is eternally one with the Father.¹

After Abraham's day the references in Genesis to patriarchal worship, though interesting as reflecting very ancient customs, do not exhibit any typical significance. They are quiet but cogent testimonies, however, that the patriarchs were not "legendary heroes," fictitious personages invented in later ages to glorify Israel² as their distinguished ancestors. They certainly are not represented as heroes, for in the narrative they are described as not only falling short of the standard of Israel, but as occasionally appearing to great disadvantage when judged according to the standard of the heathen. In social conduct they are represented as conforming to the people among whom they lived. They build altars, set up and smear pillars, slaughter victims when they make a compact, and plant trees to witness to an alliance that has been contracted, or to a dispute that has been settled. They do not hesitate to invoke the name of the Lord under sacred oaks or

¹ John xvii. 23.

² Montefiore, *Hibbert Lecture*, p. 12. See a very interesting note for his authorities. Against him we may cite Renan: "The prophecies of the ninth century

have their root in the ancient ideal of patriarchal life, an ideal partly created by the imagination, but one which had been a reality in the distant past of the tribe of Israel."—*History of the People of Israel*, vol. i. p. 11.

terebinths, and at some of the chief centres of idolatrous worship. They are described as doing freely what was afterward prohibited by the law and denounced by the prophets on account of the superstitions and idolatries associated with the rites with which the functions were celebrated.¹ Their doing so is very natural, if Genesis reflects an actual condition of things ; but if not, then the book of Genesis is a marvel of fiction, and “ must take very high rank indeed among the literary forgeries of mankind.” In like manner, while sacrificing upon all occasions, there is no differentiation of the sacrifices according to the later classification of the Law. They are designated promiscuously by names which afterwards are carefully employed to specify particular sacrifices. Their dominant motives for sacrifice are gratitude and reverential desire for the favour of God ; and though penitence may be assumed as mingled with the actions, no trace is found in any of them either of an atoning sacrifice or of any presentation of the victim’s blood, although its sanctity is declared in the Noachic Law. The ideas of the later ritual are all there, but they have not germinated. The patriarchs could not understand the full significance of their religious actions ; but they did know that their desire and endeavours to approach to God in a certain way were not resented, but accepted.² And yet, though they had not even a vague presentiment of the truth, which only

¹ Deut. xii. 3, and xvi. 21 ; *Bible*, Art. “ Sacrifice,” vol. iii. p. 1076 ; Cave, *Scripture Doctrine of Sacrifice*, p. 54 ; Sykes, *Essay*
Amos v. 5, and viii. 13, 14 ;
Isaiah lvii. 8 ; Jeremiah ii. 20.

² Smith, *Dictionary of the* *on Sacrifice*, p. 270.

maturer experience could awaken, the dispensation which they represented is now seen to have been essential in preparing the way for the Mosaic, just as, without the Mosaic, the later or Levitical stage in the history of revelation would have been impossible.

The patriarchal stage is marked by the Divine revelation of "El Shaddai," mighty in power and rich in blessing, immovable by magic or by bribe, but most accessible and helpful to faith. In the Mosaic stage "El Shaddai" is known and worshipped as "Jehovah," the Eternal, the educator of a peculiar people into a holy nation, to the end that in their obedience and purity and faith all nations might be blessed. The record of this stage begins with the book of Exodus, which, though not claiming to have been written by Moses, does profess to be Mosaic, as dealing with Mosaic times and institutions. It describes the founding of the religion of Jehovah; and it is not an unwarrantable assumption that the first prophet of that religion may originally have formulated those sections of the book which profess to exhibit "the Covenant" as the base of the religion, and to regulate its earliest worship. The revelation of Jehovah was closely associated with the promulgation of the Moral Law, as the germ from which the Mosaic religion and worship unfolded.¹ Exhibited first in outline of all that man owes to God and to his fellow-man, on two tables of stone, that outline was filled up in the original small "Book of the Covenant,"²—"perhaps the most precious archaic literary fragment which the human

¹ Spencer, *De Leg. Rit.*, i. 4.

² Exod. xx.-xxiii.

race possesses." Upon the basis of prohibiting idolatry and all that tends to it; of defending the individual from violation of his person and property; and of declaring the moral responsibilities devolving upon every member of a nation in covenant with the Lord God—one in His nature and holy in His character—the whole edifice of Hebrew legislation, as we have it in this latest edition of the Pentateuch, was gradually and steadily erected, at "sundry times and in divers manners," to suit the ever-altering circumstances of an increasing and advancing people.

As the whole system of Hebrew legislation, through whatever changes it subsequently passed, rested upon the Moral Law and the original Book of the Covenant, so the whole religion from first to last was inspired by the great fundamental truths there revealed.¹ For the ritual Divine authority was claimed; the Divine voice which proclaimed the Ten Words prescribed the sacrifices, and ordained not only the ministers who should perform them, but the times and places and methods in which they were to be offered. Instead of being supposed to bend the will of deity, which was universally the intention of heathen sacrifices, Hebrew sacrificial worship is represented as proceeding from Jehovah's will, and as designed to set forth and further His gracious purpose for His people. The whole system of Mosaic worship was intended to imprint deeply upon the conscience of an ignorant and idolatrous people the essential truths of the unity and holi-

¹ Kalisch, *Comment. on Exodus*, p. 338 seq.

ness of Jehovah, who desired to reconcile them to Himself and make them a blessing to all nations.¹ It was as symbolic as was the worship of any heathen nation; but the design and tendency of its symbolism were in direct opposition to heathen symbolism; and though it freely employed symbols common to heathenism when it could do so without sin, it was for the purpose of guarding against heathen superstition and idolatry by infusing into them a new spiritual significance, and devoting them to high moral ends.²

We have already seen how in Genesis the primitive and widely prevailing observances of the Sabbath and of Circumcision were transformed into symbols of moral and universal truth. In Exodus they are represented as the principal institutions of the Mosaic religion, and in that book special prominence is assigned to the Passover, as of equal importance with them. The Sabbath in the religion of Moses, and subsequently in the religion of Israel, was the basis of the whole cycle of festivals in the sacred year and of the great festival of the Jubilee. Circumcision in pre-Mosaic times, though implied, does not appear to have been universal or compulsory,³ but in Mosaic legislation it became the indispensable seal of the Covenant. In like manner the Passover was made the essential badge of the consecrated nation. In these institutions we have the sacraments of the Mosaic religion, the sensible signs and seals of the Covenant which Jehovah is represented as having made with His

¹ Maurice, *Sacrifice*, p. 70.

of Moses, bk. iv. ch. vi. 2.

² Warburton, *Divine Legation*

³ Exodus iv. 24.

people. In Circumcision the sacramental action was personal, and it was performed once in a lifetime; in the Passover it was national, and the ordinance was celebrated once a year;¹ in the Sabbath it was universal, and of weekly recurrence. Of the national sacrament, no slave and no stranger could partake; but the Sabbath originating in the physical and moral necessities of man, was the birthright of all the children of men, and of every animal subdued to their service. So as universal it alone found a place in the universal Moral Law, and at once, with additional significance attached to it, it was assumed by Christianity. The other two signs and seals of the Covenant were transformed into the holiest ordinances of our religion, because the truths which they symbolised are essentially Christian. Indeed, for Christians the Passover will always have a peculiar interest and value, since Christ Himself has so interpreted its predictive significance as to transform a national ordinance into a sacrament for all mankind.

The law of the Passover—though supplementary ordinances regarding it were evidently added repeatedly in the history of the nation—is set forth in Exodus as the first and only law of Moses given in Egypt.² Its antiquity has never been seriously questioned, but it is maintained that the character and purpose of the original rite were very different from the description given of them in the Bible. It is asserted that in very ancient

¹ Kalisch, *Com. on Exodus*,
p. 356 seq.

² Herzog, *Encyclopedia*, vol.
iii. 1757.

times the Passover marked the consecration of the harvest by the sacrifice of the firstlings common among the surrounding heathen, and that the historical idea of redemption from bondage had till a very late time no place—and even then a very secondary place—in its celebration.¹ It need not be questioned that piacular sacrifices marked the harvest festivals of all ancient pastoral and agricultural peoples. Solar festivals were celebrated when the sun “passes over” into Aries and ripens the grain; and lunar festivals were also kept at full moon when the last fruit was gathered. Eusebius has employed the word “passover” to designate sacrifices which were commonly offered in the ancient world to secure the success of a host setting forth on a military expedition.² In later times, moreover, when Deuteronomy came to be written, it is evident that the Passover had become connected with the harvest festival. By that time a prominent feature in its celebration was the use of unleavened bread hastily made of new meal ground from the parched corn of the first-gathered sheaf. It may be taken for granted that this and several other usages gradually gathered around it in subsequent ages, but there is no possibility of mistaking the fact that the author of the last edition of the book of Exodus gives a very different account of its origin and intention from the description which has been given us of the Arabian firstling sacrifice.

¹ Wellhausen, *Proleg.*, ch. iii. p. 83 seq.

Euseb., *Ecl. Hist.*, viii. 32; Professor Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 387 seq., 445 seq.

² Philo, *Vit. Moses*, iii. 686;

Even if it be assumed that the Passover was suggested by that heathen rite, and that in one account of it preserved in Exodus reference is made to it in the dedication of the firstlings, we shall find upon examination that the contrasts between the two are more numerous and startling than the resemblances. Coincident in the season at which it was instituted—in the fact that it was partaken of in great haste during night, by worshippers clothed not in festal garments but in ordinary attire, and that nothing of it was left until the morning—the Passover ritual differed from the heathen one in many essential particulars. The victim, unlike that of the heathen, was not sacrosanct, and instead of being devoured alive, was carefully slaughtered. Its blood was not drunk by the worshipper, but sprinkled upon the lintel and doorpost of each house; its flesh was not eaten raw, but after having been roasted with fire; and not a bone in the carcase was broken. It was eaten “with bitter herbs and unleavened bread,” described in every Scripture reference not as “first fruits,” not as the “wholesome concomitants of an Egyptian meal,” but as “bread of affliction,” reminders of “bitter bondage” and cruel oppression.¹ Its name “Pesach,” in no way connected with *πάσχειν*, to suffer, but meaning to “pass over,” or “to spare,” indicates its purpose as the memorial of a great deliverance. It was pre-eminently a sacrifice,² though in the first celebration there were neither priests nor

¹ Deuteronomy xvi. 3; Psalm lxix. 22; Jeremiah viii. 14.

² Exodus xii. 27, xxiii. 14-19; Numbers ix. 7.

altars ; but it was also a sacrament, in which the victim was partaken of by the worshipper, and nothing of it was burned save what was left unconsumed. With the exception of the blood, the whole substance of the victim was to be assimilated by the worshippers, a transaction whose typical import is clearly interpreted in the Christian Passover, the holy communion of the body and blood of Christ. Notwithstanding all the modifications and accretions of later ages, we believe that the essential significance and purpose of the original Passover remained the same. Its institution as described in Exodus was the outcome of ideas wholly unknown in any heathen religion, and to the last it commemorated the first of those "mighty acts" by which Israel was redeemed by Jehovah from bondage and educated into a peculiar people.¹

The Passover meets us appropriately as the introduction to the most solemn transaction at Sinai. Retaining something of the undifferentiated character of patriarchal sacrifices, and yet presenting new features, it was manifestly transitional. It was an essential

¹ Jewish writers lay stress upon the distinctions between the Egyptian Passover and the Perpetual Passover, that is, the Passover as it came to be celebrated in their own land. (For details see Smith, *Dict. of the Bible*, vol. ii. 713 ; Sykes, *Essay on Sacrifice*, p. 275). Notable among these modifications and additions, the Levitical idea of leaven, as producing ferment or corruption, was

conjoined with the original association of the unleavened bread. This was the general conception of the Jews down to the Christian era ; for St. Paul clearly states in 1 Cor. v. 8, the meaning of the symbol. Bähr, in his *Symbolik*, says, "The blood of the lamb cleansed from the corruption of Egypt, and unleavened bread signified the abiding state of consecration in purity."

preparation for the revelation of the Law and for the conclusion of the solemn rites by which the nation was taken into covenant with Jehovah. Abraham covenanted with God for himself and for his house, and perhaps Genesis xlv. 1, records a covenanting with God on the part of Israel for all his family. But at Sinai occurred the covenanting in which the whole people assumed the obligations involved in their redemption. For just as St. Paul reminds us that the sacrifice of "Christ our passover" for us, involves our personal consecration and obliges us to become God's saints, so Jehovah's redemption of them under shelter of the paschal blood was inevitably followed by their consecration to a holy vocation. Having given "Egypt for their ransom," having "led them out of the deep as a shepherd leads his flock,"¹ having protected them by hovering between them and danger by day and by night, He brought them into a sanctuary—holy in the estimation of the ancient world long before their fathers went down to Egypt—and there, before an altar prepared from the beginning of the world, they were separated and sanctified as His "kingdom of priests" for the "blessing of all nations."

The revelation of "the Law," "the Testimony," "the Ten Words," "the Commandments," "the Words of the covenant"²—a revelation communicated through the spirit and soul of Moses—marks perhaps, next to the coming of Christ, the most important event in the

¹ Isaiah lxiii. 13.

xxxii. 15, xxxiv. 29 ; Matthew xix. 17 ; Mark x. 19 ; Luke xviii.

² Exodus xxxiv. 28, xxxi. 18, 20 ; Romans xiii. 9.

history of mankind. In no other religion do we find any suggestion approaching to it in sublimity. Mazdeism professed indeed to be a revelation, but the initial point of the revelation is found in the wish or the requirements of man, not in the nature or will of Deity. In answer to the demand or entreaty of Zarathrusta, Ahura reveals or proclaims the Vendidad, the "fiend-destroying" book of magic spells rather than of moral precepts. In Mosaism, Jehovah, essentially invisible and yet ever revealing, comes down to Israel and calls to them "to hear." It is impossible to exaggerate the moment of the truths of God's unity, supremacy, and holiness ; of His eternal intolerance of any attempts to represent Him in the likeness of anything, or to propitiate Him with any other service than righteousness and piety ; then deposited in the conscience of one man for mankind. It was a revelation too pure for Israel to receive ; it took long centuries of severe correction and discipline to translate it into the shadow of a reality, and to the latest period of their history it towered high above and perpetually rebuked both their belief and their practice. At the time when it was promulgated to them, they were a horde of emancipated slaves, very intolerant of a Divine authority "too moral to coerce them."¹ Therefore the Divine training had to be accommodated to their moral and intellectual capacities. As children have to be educated by the aid of pictures and models, and are made to conform to a framework of compulsory service till they acquire power to know and choose the right

¹ Fairbairn, *Religion in the Life of To-day*, pp. 39, 49.

from conviction, so it required the minute restrictions of their Law and the elaborate symbolism of their religion to instruct them that they must be holy as Jehovah eternally is. The symbolism was carefully subordinated to the great purpose in view; it was used as a skilled orator employs a metaphor, not for the sake of ornament, but because of its fitness to suggest truth. The more it is examined, the more clearly we realise that it was employed in the service of a very spiritual religion, and that it was eminently adapted to wean an ignorant and brutish people from idolatry, and to educate them to truer conceptions and worthier service of God.¹

We have an instance of the use of this solemn and impressive symbolism in the transaction in which they were consecrated as a kingdom of priests.² They could appreciate the sublime dignity of their vocation, for they had been redeemed from bondage to a people among whom the priesthood was supreme, wearing alone of all castes in their circumcision the seal of their consecration and the badge of their supremacy. They were to mediate as the circumcised priests of Jehovah between Him and all nations. He had given them a law which was the charter of all human freedom, and in keeping that law they would not only

¹ "Jehovah was the God of justice. He was jealous in vindicating His own outraged honour, but his severity was the guardian of morality. His sanctuary from the earliest times was the depository of law, and the priest was His spokesman. The

Torah was a deep moral influence. There is good reason to suppose that the priestly *Torah* is the one religious institution which can be correctly attributed to Moses." —Montefiore, *Hibbert Lecture*, p. 44.

² Exodus xxiv. 1-18.

stand fast in the liberty which He gave them, they would bring upon all men "the blessing of faithful Abraham." They had accepted that law in ready, emphatic, repeated professions of acquiescence and obedience; but these were not considered adequate. As originally with Abraham, the Divine covenant had to be concluded over a sacrifice.¹ So, an altar was erected as a suggestive symbol of the meeting-point of Jehovah with the nation, and around it were placed twelve pillars representing the tribes. As the priesthood had not been instituted, and as the laws regarding sacrifice were not yet proclaimed, the ceremonial is represented as bearing traces of transition from the patriarchal type. Neither the "heads of families," nor "the seventy" representative and ruling "elders" of Israel were the slaughterers. The office, which was afterwards performed by the Levites, was upon this occasion entrusted "to young men" who acted under the direction of Moses, by whom alone the purely sacrificial acts were done. The sacrifice consisted of burnt-offerings which were wholly consumed, and of peace-offerings the greater part of which were sacramentally eaten. The blood instead of being allowed to flow upon the desert was carefully caught up, and one half of it was solemnly poured out upon the altar. Then, after Moses had read aloud the Book in which he had written all the words of the law, and after the people had professed their readiness to do and observe all that the Lord had commanded them, he took the other half of the blood and sprinkled it upon the

¹ Psalm l. 5.

people, or upon as many of them as he could reach, saying, "Lo, the blood of the covenant which Jehovah hath made with you concerning these words."¹

The intention of this sprinkling can only with probability be inferred by collating the narrative with others in the Pentateuch. The so-called parallels cited from classical antiquity are only very superficially related to the subject, and have no real connexion with the essential idea of a sacrifice which sealed a covenant bond between Jehovah and His people.² In the Targums Onkelos and Jonathan, verse 8th in Exodus, 24th chapter, is rendered, "He sprinkled blood upon the altar to expiate the people." This interpretation quite accords with the teaching of the Law of sacrifice, but in the light of that teaching the people can hardly be described as having been sprinkled for the same purpose. The significant feature in the action was the offering of the blood at the altar *for them*, before it was sprinkled *upon them*. Whatever expiation may have been intended was therefore completed when the pure life in the blood was brought into contact with the symbol of Jehovah; and in the sprinkling of the people with it there was communicated to them the efficacy which it had acquired by its dedication.³ It was only in the

¹ Genesis xxiv. 3-11.

² "If the Roman people break this treaty by public concert or by wicked fraud, do thou, O Jupiter, strike them as I do this victim" (*Livy*, i. 24, and xix. 252). The spilling of the wine in the ritual is thus interpreted: "May

the blood of those who first break this league be so poured out" (*Iliad*, iii. 298; Æschylos, *Sept. contra Thebas*, 43; Xenophon, *Anab.*, ii. 2, 9).

³ Oehler, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. i. 393.

ordination of the priests and in the yearly access of the high priest to the mercy-seat, that persons were sprinkled or anointed with blood. Upon these occasions the blood was taken directly from the altar; on this occasion, though divided between the altar and the people, the blood was the same, and the one idea in both cases was exhibited; namely, the *baptism* of Israel into covenant with Jehovah with the same blood which had made atonement for them. Their consecration was to be in newness of life; Divine energy alone could sanctify them for the office of standing close in the presence of the Most High; and the communication of this energy or inspiration was symbolised to them by their being sprinkled with blood which had acquired all its virtue from its being brought nigh to Jehovah for them.¹

Through consecration in the blood of the Covenant, the tribes were qualified to celebrate the feast which in archaic times generally concluded a covenant sacrifice. Therefore taking portions of the peace-offerings, Moses, Aaron, and his two sons, along with seventy of the elders of Israel, are represented as having ascended the mountain. There, as they were celebrating their sacrament, Jehovah is said to have made Himself known to them, as Christ is recorded to have manifested Himself to His disciples in the breaking of bread. "They saw the God of Israel," but not with the bodily eye. With Deuteronomy iv. 12, and Exodus xxxiii. 20, and similar Pentateuchal texts, reminding us that God

¹ Kurtz, *History of the Old Covenant*, vol. iii. p. 145; Keil and Delitzsch, *Com. on the Pent.*, vol. ii. pp. 156-57.

cannot be seen by the eye, cannot even be comprehended by the mind, but can only be apprehended by the spirit, we may be sure that no similitude was presented to them. It seems, however, to be suggested by the narrative, that the pure blue of the heavens above them lent its influence, as nature sometimes does, to help the spiritual faculty to realise what neither sense nor intellect could apprehend. It was an ecstatic moment in their religious history. Their sacrifice had been accepted, and they had passed beyond the fence with which the sacred mount had hitherto been barred against them. They had entered within the thick cloud that shrouded it; and lo, instead of darkness and deathful fires, everything was bright and clear and calm. They found themselves where it was pure blessedness to be. With marvellous distinctness they were conscious of the Divine Presence, not as inspiring terror but as awaking joy. It was as if they had seen the face of God and lived, for to them it had been revealed that though the external manifestations of Jehovah are dreadful in their majesty, the "secret of the Lord" is love; that although in holiness He is a terror to the uncovenanted and sinful, He manifests Himself to His own consecrated people as a God of peace. As long as they were standing in their sinfulness unbaptized before the mount, the nearness of Jehovah could only disturb them as exciting a "fearful looking for judgment"; but now, when covenanted they were upon the mount in a state of conformity to the Divine law, God, the unchangeable source of all law, was radiant in the

beauty which their saintly psalmists afterwards prayed they might behold as their "exceeding joy."¹

In the Passover which inaugurated the covenant in Egypt, and the sacrifice which ratified it at Sinai, we have the first clear intimation of the doctrine of the efficacy of the blood, which was to play so important a part in the religious training of Israel. The symbolic significance of sacrificial blood to many successive generations of Israelites, and its typical significance to us—so clearly interpreted by our Lord's pathetic references and the teaching of His Apostles—will be considered in the next lecture. Meanwhile it is important to note, that in the very first mention of its application in sacrifice, it meets us, not as the symbol of power ended in death, but as the seal of energy liberated through death. Blood of sacrifice had efficacy to protect Israel from destruction in Egypt, and also to qualify them at Sinai for sacramental communion with Jehovah. Through "the blood of the covenant" Jehovah thus redeemed and consecrated them, baptizing them from out of the common life of all peoples into a Divine vocation as His kingdom of priests.² So when, in the New Testament, we find the expression, now almost world-wide in its use, "the Blood of Christ," the connexion in which it meets us, and the application to which it is put, leave no doubt that it signifies, not the efficacy of His death but of His life to atone. It is intended to suggest the virtue of His whole obedience

¹ Hoffman, *Schriftbeweiss*, vol. i. p. 336; Ewald, *History of Israel*, vol. ii. p. 106.

"By the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit."

² Zechariah says, chap. ix. 11,

consummated in absolute self-sacrifice, which could not be extinguished in, yea, not even be "holden of death." For Christ who died passed triumphantly through death, to exercise as long as there is need for it a cleansing and renewing power in humanity. In the Old and New Testaments alike, blood that has been shed for God or in His service is always represented as "living." The blood of Abel which in Genesis is described as "crying out of the ground," is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews still to "speak to us."¹ Therefore, under this "most vivid and pregnant of word images"—the blood of Christ—in which we have epitomised the whole Gospel doctrine of the Divine sacrifice, there is set forth to us the reality of the Divine sacrifice as a living and life-giving power. For the death which Christ endured as the penalty of human transgression—in which by assuming our nature He was involved—freed Him from the limitations of time and space to reign for ever as Prince and Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sin.²

Thus it was that in a time of great trial to devout Hebrew Christians, when the old order had changed completely, and the new order, which God was bringing in, was "not sufficiently understood to be welcomed," the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews sought to steady and comfort his countrymen by particular reference to the transactions which we have been considering. He endeavoured to convince them that the institutions from which they parted with such painful regret, were neither complete in themselves, nor original nor inde-

¹ Hebrews xi. 4.

² Acts v. 31.

pendent. They were only shadows, adumbrations of heavenly realities, which were even then being disclosed. The ancient covenant on which they rested all their hopes, was only a temporary and preparatory type of the better and everlasting covenant which was revealed in Christ. That covenant, whose law was written in tables of stone, they never kept but brake; but the law of the new covenant which was being written upon their hearts, would be kept and loved by them as their very life. If they wanted a pledge of its efficacy they would find it in the sacrifice which had ratified and made it operative. For the God of Peace, through the blood of the everlasting covenant—through the virtue of the life which Christ offered for the expiation of the world—had brought Him again from the dead as the great Shepherd of the sheep, to cleanse out from their natures all that was evil, to repair what was decayed, to supply what was defective, and to work in them for ever and ever that which was well pleasing in His own sight.¹

In like manner he interpreted for them the real significance of the Covenant feast at Sinai. For he reminded them that when they gathered together to celebrate the feast of the New Covenant over God's sacrifice of atonement, which has been offered "once for all," they drew near to no terrible mountain in a dreadful desert. They had come to Mount Zion, "the city of the living God," where myriads of the angels and all the saints, instead of dispensing a fiery law, were holding a joyous festival, which they shared with all who were sprinkled with the

¹ Hebrews xiii. 20-21.

more excellent blood of Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant. He assured them that this blood really effects what the sprinkling of sacrificial blood under the old Covenant only typified—the cleansing away of guilt. The blood of “Abel the righteous” did testify to all generations God’s readiness to accept the faith of His servant, but it had no power to purify and pacify the conscience of the guilty brother. The blood of Jesus testified and offered forgiveness even to those who shed it,¹ and through that blood all believers have “been sanctified”² to fulfil the vocation for which Israel under the old covenant was confessedly unfit. For through the Eternal Spirit they have been consecrated a royal priesthood fitted to enjoy the fellowship and favour of God, and to mediate the Divine blessing to all who are still without and afar off.³

In interpreting the predictive significance of the covenant at Sinai, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews gives prominence to the belief that it could not be concluded without the sacrifice of a life. “Where a covenant is, there must also of necessity be the death of him who made it.”⁴ It is a startling

¹ Acts iii. 19.

² Hebrews x. 29.

³ Westcott, *Epist. to Hebrews*, p. 416 *seq.*; Delitzsch, *Com. on Hebrews*, vol. ii. p. 343 *seq.*

⁴ Heb. ix. 16. The account given in Hebrews, ch. ix., differs in respect of additions to it from the narrative in Exodus, ch. xxiv. The writer tells us that along with calves, goats were also em-

ployed as victims, though under the Law they were only offered for sin-offerings. He also indicates that the Book of the Covenant was sprinkled with blood and water by means of hyssop and coccas wool. Josephus (*Antiq.*, iii. 8, 6) agrees with him as to this, so probably he expanded by a reference to traditional data the brief description in Exodus. De-

statement when considered in the light of old-world customs, for in concluding a covenant between man and man, the death of one of the parties was in no way necessary. Among savage and barbarous peoples a compact was sealed by blood drawn from and tasted by the covenanting parties. And among civilised peoples victims might be slaughtered to furnish a basis for the imprecation of the priest upon any impious treaty-breaker. In all these cases the contracting parties were equal; but in the Divine covenant they could not be equal even if man were innocent, and this natural inequality of man is fearfully aggravated since sin and death, its penalty, adhere to him. Man cannot draw near to God, nor even propose to covenant with God, without bringing to light the real character of his sin as meriting death, and separating him from God. He can only be brought into covenant with God under provisions which render his sin harmless. We shall see how in the "transactional liturgy of the law" all this was temporarily accomplished; but it is important to note how carefully the writers of the Pentateuch instruct us, that in applying the word covenant to a Divine transaction

litzsch bids us note that his phrase, "calves and goats," was the writer's standing expression to denote all bleeding sacrifices, just as his other expression, "gifts and offerings," embraced offerings of every description. His reference to the after-sprinkling of the tabernacle and priesthood in connexion with the sprinkling of the nation in the covenant

rite, was no anachronism. He disregarded the precise order of time to group together facts which helped to exhibit and confirm the great idea which he sought to express in verse 18, namely that the old covenant could not be concluded without the shedding and offering of blood (Delitzsch, *Hebrews*, vol. ii. pp. 91-141).

with man, they do so only in the way of accommodation. It is Jehovah who initiates, carries out, and concludes these covenants. By using the phrase, therefore, they seek to impress upon us the grace of God, who in all these transactions was revealing His purpose of salvation, and was preparing for the disclosure of the mystery by which that purpose was to be realised. Before demanding from Israel surrender to His law, He gave them undemanded the token of His good will, in redeeming them from bondage through the blood of the Passover. Before calling them to accept their vocation at Sinai, the blood of expiation was shed for them. His every dealing with them rested upon some foreseen atonement to be effected by a Mediator yet to come, but by a Mediator to be sent forth from Himself. These typical covenants between man and Jehovah—these Divine and human co-operations for the gracious end of deliverance from the primal curse—were prophecies of a scheme which began to be unfolded in the Incarnation. Then was manifested the Divine Mediator, not God and man, but God in man. God-Man; not two, but one; not two separate wills, but two wills blended—"I in Thee, and Thou in Me"—that He "might put away sin" by the sacrifice of Himself, and become "the Author of eternal salvation unto all that obey Him."¹

It may be observed that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews very explicitly brings out "the grace" displayed in all former covenantings, which were fulfilled in the New Covenant

¹ Hebrews ix. 26 ; v. 9.

established by Christ, and sealed by the sacred "blood of God Himself,"¹ in the use to which he puts the word *διαθήκη* in chapter ix. It is a word not only more expressive, but much more comprehensive than the Hebrew word "Berith," for it combines the notion of covenant arrangements between two parties, with that of "will" or "settlement," expressed in our word "testament." Both significations were present in the writer's mind; but in verse 15—in which he states that the blood of Christ, representing the self-surrender of a sinless and at the same time endless (*αἰώνιον*) life, that is of a life absolute, divine, and purely self-determined, has the inwardly propitiating, purifying, consecrating power (vv. 18-22), which was wholly lacking in the material sacrifices of involuntary and unconscious victims, and in the external purifications of the law—the idea of covenant passes over into that of a testamentary settlement. And for this cause, "*He is the mediator of a new διαθήκη.*" It was a legitimate and an appropriate application of the Greek word, quite warranted by the reference in chap. viii. p. 10, to the covenant prophesied and promised through Jeremiah. Throughout the Old Testament the blessings which were to accrue from the Divine covenant are often designated by the term "inheritance," a word which exercised on all the writers of the New Testament a very powerful influence. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews leaves us in no doubt as to his apprehension of its significance. In its completeness it is, as in verse 15, the "eternal inheritance," "the good things to come," of chap. ix. 11, "the world to come," of chap. ii. 5, "the rest that remaineth," of chap. iv. 9, "the glorified world of the future." But it is also a present blessing as having been begun to be fulfilled in all who believe (chap. iv. p. 3). This inheritance which God (*ὁ διαθέμενος*) promised or destined for mankind, has been placed in the hands of Christ the Mediator, the fulfiller of the covenant conditions upon which the inheritance is disposed, and the recipient of it on behalf of the race, His brethren,

¹ Acts xx. 28.

whom He represents. Naturally, therefore, before His crucifixion we find Him, in St. Luke xxii. 29, assigning to His disciples "a kingdom," as His Father assigned it to Him, and the means by which this assignment became effective was His redeeming and atoning death, "*the blood shed for you*," as in St. Luke xxii. 20, "*the blood shed for many*," as in St. Mark xiv. 24, and as in St. Matthew xxvi. 28, "*shed for many for the remission of sin*."

In common life an heir can only enter on his inheritance by the death of the testator, but in this case it is an *atoning* death that must intervene, a "*death for the redemption of transgressions under the first testament*." The testament of Sinai is specified, for it had a universal significance as convicting, not only Israel but all mankind of sin. Universal human sin must be atoned, covered, exterminated, declared forgiven, as Jeremiah had promised, before the inheritance could be enjoyed. So in a far fuller and deeper sense, the saying in verse 16, "where a testament is there must also be the fact of the death of the testator" to secure its validity, applies to this case.

For the death of Christ, the culminating act of His conscious, absolute sacrifice of self in love, was necessary, as the method whereby God's forgiveness and salvation could be brought to a sinful race, and the means whereby alone a sinful race could be purified, qualified, and rendered capable of receiving the "eternal inheritance." His application of the word *διαθήκη* therefore is a very forcible confirmation of what we have said, that the Bible writers in Old and New Testaments alike are careful to impress upon us the lesson that we must not use the word "covenant" as if it expressed a mutual agreement between equal parties. Its proper significance is that of an "ordinance" or "settlement" on God's part for us, realised by the co-operation of the Divine and human: so Christ is the *μεσίτης* or mediator by whom it is executed (cp. Delitzsch, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, vol. ii. pp. 91-124).

LECTURE V

SACRIFICE AS EXHIBITED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Mosaic and Levitical Sacrifices

THE civil and religious legislation generally described as Mosaic, cannot all be ascribed to the Mosaic age. As set forth in the Books of Exodus and Leviticus, it represents a code which, in its minute and complicated details, must have been formulated at a late period, by persons well acquainted with the Book of Deuteronomy and with the earlier prophetic writings. It is not the production of one man, or even of one generation, but the fruit of the experiences of centuries. Deuteronomy, however, surely implies the existence of a more ancient Proteronomy, and the Levitical law, composed of various portions, enlarged and modified to suit the necessities and conditions of successive ages, must have been based upon more archaic regulations. The theory of the authors of the Pentateuch, who ascribe to Moses and to the times of the Exodus the original basis upon which the whole system of legislation in Israel was subsequently reared, is surely as reasonable as is the

modern one that the creed and ritual represented in the Pentateuch were naturally developed from Semitic polytheism. We have only to compare Leviticus with the Brahmânas, the Yâsna, the Lî Ki, to feel how immeasurable is the contrast presented in the Hebrew legislation, and to be convinced that however long may be the development which its latest codification represents, it must have originated in much higher and purer religious conceptions. It would be almost a miracle that a religion so directly designed to be a defence against polytheism, should prove to be its natural and legitimate outgrowth.

It is conceded that the great merit and distinctive honour of Moses as the founder or prophet of a new religion, lies in the fact that he clearly and indissolubly connected the religious idea with the moral life.¹ Jehovah, the God of Israel, was as righteous as He was powerful. The Mosaic conception may, indeed we believe that it does, represent an advance upon the patriarchal conception of Deity ; but the development, if ever it can be traced, will not be one from cosmic to ethical ideas, but from a narrower monotheistic conception to a larger and purer one. Moses saw more clearly the one supreme object of worship, towards whom Abraham could only dimly look ; just as the revelation vouchsafed to him was limited, compared with that made known to the later prophets. Scripture

¹ Kuenen, *Rel. of Israel*, vol. i. p. 282 ; Kamphausen, *Theol. Stud. und Krit.*, p. 201 ; Well-

hausen, *Hist. of Israel*, p. 397 note ; Montefiore, *Hibbert Lecture*, pp. 47-49.

clearly instructs us that the revelation recorded in the Old Testament was communicated *πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτροπῶς*.¹ It was not concentrated in a single prophecy, or mediated by a single agent; it was distributed through many channels, and mediated by a succession of different agents.² But Scripture, from beginning to end, tells us only of Deity as One, Holy, Invisible. And the supporters of the theory that we have in the religion of Israel the result of a procession or progression of thought from polytheism to henotheism, from henotheism to pure monotheism, can only weave their ingenious web by destroying or pronouncing false the Bible account of the matter.

The account preserved in the Bible appears to be natural and consistent with the times and circumstances which it professes to represent. For example, from the narrative given of the ratification of the covenant with Israel at Sinai to that of the institution of the sanctuary, the priesthood, and public worship, there is no abrupt transition. For these were all required for the realisation of Israel's mission, and for the maintenance and renewal of the covenant. They were all such as the man who had been appointed to train the emancipated tribes into a nation—great, because holy to Jehovah—could originate and provide out of the resources at his command. He was learned in all the wisdom of Egypt, initiated into the mysteries of its higher religion,³ and quite capable

¹ Hebrews i. 1.

³ Eusebius, *Præp. Evang.*, ix.

² Driver, *Discourses in Old Test.*, p. 120.

26, 27; Philo, *Vita Moses*, ii. 1, 4.

of applying the lessons of his rich experience to meet the necessities of his vocation. The description, moreover, of the circumstances in which he felt called upon to provide these institutions, is upon the face of it much more credible than the allegation that they were conceived after the pattern of the Temple and its services by some literary forger in Israel's latest age. However modified and enlarged they may have been in subsequent stages of their religious and political history, we may be confident that further investigation will in the main confirm the conclusion, which has been drawn by scholars who cannot be accused of leaning to notions popularly regarded as orthodox, that the Torah and the institutions required to give effect to it, carry us back to Moses and the Exodus.

They were all required to meet the necessity expressed in the universal confession evoked by the manifestation of the Divine holiness, that the tribes were not qualified to assume towards other peoples, and especially towards Jehovah, the high relation which a kingdom of priests implied. Their entreaty for a mediator between them and Jehovah¹ marked therefore another stage in the Divine revelation, and prepared the way for the better covenant and for the true Mediator, who, though "like unto Moses,"² would, as far greater, do what Moses could not do. He, found afterwards "in fashion like a man," would be able to "look upon the face" of God and live; but Moses, although Jehovah spake unto him "as a man speaketh

¹ Exodus xx. 19.

² Deuteronomy xviii. 18.

unto his friend," could not see His face, but only caught a glimpse of the outskirts of "His march of mystery."¹ Unto him in a moment of supreme aspiration was revealed the truth, that Jehovah, eternally holy, was merciful and gracious ; that while punishing iniquity and sin² He pardoned it. Yet how this could be so, how the Holy could be the forgiver of sin, was a mystery to the meekest of men. The method by which this reconciliation was to be effected was a secret into which the angels desired to look. Moses' proffer of his life for the lives of the sinful people had been rejected,³ but the very disposition which induced him to make it, may have involved insight as to the significance of the pure blood of atonement which had been employed in the initial and concluding rites of the Covenant which they had broken. In any case, through this sacrificial act there was divinely suggested a way of approach, by which, for the time, a sinful people, through their Mediator, could present their prayers to Jehovah, and receive His pardon and blessing.

Sinai—a holy place long before the tribes came to it—was sure to become, after the revelation of the Law and the conclusion of the Covenant, even more sacred in their regard. The idea of a holy place has an idolatrous tendency, suggesting a spot in which deity can be circumscribed, or from which deity may be excluded. To defend the tribes against such superstitions, Moses, whose civil legislation often represented reform of existing laws, felt himself divinely empowered to

¹ Exod. xxxiii. 11, 20-23. ² Exod. xxxiv. 6-7. ³ Exod. xxxii. 31-32.

originate the Tabernacle. Jehovah would be accessible to them, not upon the cloud-covered summit of Sinai, nor at such shrines as their ancestors had been familiar with before their descent into Egypt—at fountain, or grove, or high place—but from among themselves. From out of all the sanctuaries which man has discovered or devised, there comes an intimation “Come ye up hither and apart, and I will do thee good ;” but from the sanctuary which Jehovah fixed and not man, went forth the assurance, “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” The “whole earth is filled with His glory,” but His special presence is with the people. This was the old theocratic ideal from which the Temple and its services localised at Jerusalem were really a declension; and this probably accounts for the fact that in the Epistle to the Hebrews, not the Temple and its worship, but the Tabernacle and its ordinances, are always referred to as the shadow and pattern of heavenly things.

So there was provided for them out of the materials at their command, and by the skill which they had acquired in Egypt—nothing like any of the temples which they had witnessed there—an oblong portable tent constructed of acacia planks, plated with gold, and fitted together with silver. It was curtained by four coverings of divers materials and workmanship, the innermost and the costliest being adorned with mystic embroidery. By veils the interior was divided into an innermost space, a perfect cube of ten cubits, called the “Most Holy place”; another space of equal height and breadth, but twice as long, called the “Holy place”; and without, in front of

it, was a large court bounded by wooden pillars sustaining upon connecting rods the enclosing hangings. The whole structure rested upon silver sockets too heavy to be easily moved, too large to sink into the sand—representing the amount of the half ounce of silver which every fighting man in the tribes contributed as his personal acknowledgment of the ransom of his soul—a pathetic and significant memorial to themselves and to all the world that the foundation of all privileges, civil and sacred, must rest upon the fact of Divine redemption.¹

In the “outer court” were the laver, made of the copper mirrors of the women, and the altar of burnt-offering. This was a square case of acacia wood lined with copper within and without, with projections or horns of copper at its four corners. In the “Holy place” were the altar of incense—also horned, and all overlaid with gold—the table of the shew-bread similarly overlaid, and the golden candlestick, whose seven branches were ornamented with almond blossoms in gold. In the “Most Holy place” was the Ark of the Testimony—a rectangular acacia box plated within and without with purest gold, containing the two tables of stone and “the book of the covenant.” Its lid, called the Cappellet or mercy-seat, was a massive plate of finest gold, having at the ends two golden cherubim whose faces were toward each other, and whose wings overshadowed the space beneath. The actual form of the cherubim cannot be affirmed, but their attitude, and indeed the

¹ C. H. Waller, *The Silver Sockets*, p. 4; Lightfoot, *Gleanings from Exodus*, Works, Pitman edition, vol. ii. p. 390 seq.

employment of them in other religions, indicated that at least they were not objects of reverence. In their adoring gaze upon the mercy-seat they symbolised the worship of some part of creation. The only symbol of Deity was the "shekina," between and above them—"dark with excessive light"—and so no likeness of any thing in heaven above or upon the earth beneath confronted the solitary high priest, when upon the most solemn occasions he presented the atonement for himself and for the people.¹

The Tabernacle, and its divisions, furniture, and ornaments, were objects not wholly unfamiliar to the Israelites, for otherwise they would have failed of their purpose.² There was a vast difference, however, in the ideas suggested by them and the uses to which they were put. Every sacred structure which the Israelites had seen in Egypt was part of an idolatrous system, based upon and embodying only physiolatrous ideas. The arks which they had seen placed in the temples,

¹ Spencer, *De Leg. Heb.*, lib. iii. diss. v. cap. iv.; Oehler, *Old Test. Theol.*, vol. i. p. 119; Bähr, *Symbolik*, 2nd edit. p. 362 seq.; Wilkinson, *Religion and Architecture of Ancient Egypt*, p. 275.

² For similarities between Egyptian temples and the tabernacle, see Lübke, *History of Art*, vol. i. pp. 21-24. For discussion as to the form of the cherubim, see same book, vol. i. p. 64. Save in the symbolism of wings, the cherubim were not Egyptian any more than they were Persian or Assyrian in their origin. A well-

known relieve of Cyrus shows an Egyptian head-dress and two mighty pairs of wings. In the vision of Isaiah the cherubim had six. Very interesting resemblances of ancient Assyrian temples to that of Solomon, both in respect of structure and furniture, are noted by Sayce (*Hibbert Lecture*, p. 64). In Assyria, Babylonia, and Egypt, the "ark" figured very prominently, and was employed for the same purpose in their worship, but that purpose was antagonistic to the use made of it in Israel.

or carried abroad in solemn processions, were supposed to be the shrines of the reproductive powers of nature. The ark of Israel on the contrary enshrined the moral law, the sole foundation of the covenant and the charter of their freedom. The ideas suggested by all the symbolism of their Tabernacle were purely ethical, and all its arrangements were designed and contrived to lead the thoughts away from material objects to what is invisible and spiritual. It was as far removed from an Egyptian temple as was a Christian basilica from a Roman shrine. For in polytheism the temple was supposed to be the palace of the god, and therefore it was furnished with becoming luxury, while all its daily service revolved—as in India it still does—around the belief that the priests were ministering to his sleeping, awaking, dressing, feeding, and reposing again.¹ The Tabernacle was indeed designated “the dwelling,”² but it was also called the “tent of witness,”³ and the “tent of meeting.”⁴ The first designation suggested the great truth of God’s presence, the second the reality of God’s holy character, and the third the fact of His accessibility. Putting the three together, it is plain that the Tabernacle in the estimation of the tribes was not just a “tent of larger dimensions and richer materials prepared for the dwelling of their invisible Chief,”⁵ as

¹ Cp. Monier Williams, *Religious Thought in India*, pp. 442-3.

² “Mishkan,” “Ohel,” “Baith,” Exodus xxix. 43-44.

³ Exodus xxv. 21; Numbers ix. 15.

⁴ Exodus xxx. 6. “The Tent of meeting” in Authorised Version is wrongly translated as the “tabernacle of the congregation.”

⁵ Stanley, *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 165.

“magnificent and palatial a habitation as they could rear for their Almighty King.”¹ Such was indeed the conception upon which all heathen shrines and temples had been reared;² but the Tabernacle was in the purest ethical sense a “sanctuary”³—which sensuality in any form would profane—a holy place wherein, under certain provisions, Jehovah would communicate with His people in order that He might instruct and sanctify them.⁴

Jehovah was approachable there, but approach to Him was arranged in accordance with the character of the revelation and the fitness of His people to receive it. Its threefold divisions and their furniture, and the increasing wealth of the materials of which they were constructed, indicated different stages of approach, and marked the limits within which approach would be profitable to them. None but members of the chosen race could enter the sacred “outer court.” Into the “Holy place,” though able to present themselves before it, the people of Israel could not enter. Only through the medium of the priests, their consecrated representatives, could they pass into that shrine; while into the “Most Holy place” none but the High Priest once a year, after the most solemn preparations, was permitted to come. Again the conditions of their

¹ Spencer, *De Leg. Rit. Heb.*, lib. iii. c. iii. § 2.

² Bähr reminds us that ancient royal palaces were constructed after the model of temples, just as royal ceremonials were copied

from the worship of the gods (*Symbolik*, i. 10-15 and 113-116).

³ *Kadosh; Mikdash.*

⁴ Faber, *Horæ Mosaicæ*, vol. ii. p. 234.

approach were clearly set forth in the uses to which the furniture of each division was put. In the outer court, the copper laver and the copper-plated altar of burnt-offering, marked that the fundamental requirement of all approach was purification and surrender to Jehovah. In the Holy place, the golden-plated altar of incense, and its two companion altars—the table of the shew-bread and the candlestick—indicated in a higher form the service which a people whose sins were covered by the blood of the sacrifice in the outer court, rendered through their priests. For that blood was smeared upon the horns of the golden altar which was placed against the inner veil, so as to be in face of the ark. The incense which was burned upon it expressed the prayers and aspirations of a forgiven and accepted people; the bread and wine placed upon the table on one side represented the fruit of their labours—not offered as upon heathen lectisternia for the food of Jehovah—but *shewn* before Him who rejoiced in the works of His people; and the oil—representing, it is said, the intellectual life and work of man—was offered on the altar of the candlestick placed on the other side of the golden altar of incense. Bread, wine, oil, and fragrant spices were all offered with the burnt sacrifice upon the copper altar in the outer court. So what was combined in one article in the court was in the holy place resolved into three, setting forth the ideas in a clearer and fuller light. For in the Holy place a people reconciled by the blood of atonement offered their sacrifice of thanksgiving for successful work, and of intercession that

all the ends of the earth might see the salvation of God.¹

Thus far was indicated the divinely-appointed way of His people's approach to Jehovah, but the innermost chamber and its furniture symbolised Jehovah's approach in His sovereignty and holiness to His people, to sanctify and bless them. The "ark of the testimony" was the foundation of the third altar, and upon it the Cappareth—or mercy-seat of solid gold—was interposed between the tables of the law and the Shekina, the symbol by which, above the adoring cherubim, the Divine Presence was suggested. Upon that altar on the great day of atonement, the blood of the holiest sin-offering was sprinkled, and from it the accepted High Priest brought back to the expectant people the Divine benediction. This sprinkling of the Cappareth or "*hilasterion*" with the blood of the sin-offering—corresponding to the anointing of the other altars with the blood of the ordinary sacrifices—marked the highest mediation of atonement in the old covenant. Upon the mercy-seat in the Most Holy place, Jehovah's most perfect act of grace was consummated, and from it went forth the mediator with the message of Divine reconciliation to His people. While every part of the Tabernacle therefore was sacred

¹ Wine, though not mentioned in any passage, is taken for granted as being shewn with the bread upon the golden table, in the frequent allusions to bowls and cans belonging to that table. Exod. xxv. 29, xxxvii. 16; Numbers iv. 7. Philo interprets (*Vita*

Moses, iii. 9) the golden altar, table, and candlestick, as symbolising the thanksgiving of all creation, for elemental food, human prayer, and heavenly light. Westcott, *Com. on Hebrews*, p. 245; Kurtz, *Sacrifice*, pp. 47, 318, 321; Winer, *Bib. Dict.*, pp. 170-72.

as suggesting the presence of Jehovah, it was specially at these altars that His presence was most realised. At the altar of burnt-offering in the Court, the people presented themselves before Jehovah; in the Holy place at its threefold altar, the priests representing the people met Him. And in the Holiest of all, the High Priest as mediator both of priests and of people was admitted at the altar of solid gold to the closest access that was possible in that stage of the Divine revelation. This, however, was effected only through the virtue of "*the blood of atonement*." The only possible meeting-place for the holy Jehovah and a sinful race, was an altar anointed or sprinkled with the pure blood of a sacrifice.¹

We are not left to discover for ourselves the typical significance of the Tabernacle, for it has been interpreted for us by the unknown writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In his days many scribes, following Philo and Josephus,² found in the Tabernacle the symbols alike of the universe and of the nature of man. The analogies suggested by them were all physical or intellectual; but in reading that Epistle in the light of the Gospels, we find ourselves influenced by much loftier and purer conceptions of the Divine dispensation and of human destiny. We are instructed that the prophecy of God's accessibility to a sinful race was realised when the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us.³ In Christ, as Emmanuel, God in His holiness came so close

¹ Cave, *Script. Doct. of Sacrifice*, p. 95. *Jud.*, v. 5, 4, 7; *Antiq.*, iii. 77.

² *Vita Moses*, iii. 14'; *Bell.* ³ Witsius, *Misc. Sacra*, book ii. dissert. i.

to mankind that the poor in spirit and pure in heart, in their mourning for sin and in their hunger and thirst for righteousness, could see Him. This dispensation of God manifest in the flesh—of which the whole religion of Israel was a prophecy—was in itself a preparation for the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. In the development of the kingdom of God it corresponded with and fulfilled the sacrificial atonement and mediation required for the people in the outer court. That having been accomplished by Christ, His reconciled people, consecrated as a royal priesthood, offer now with confidence in the holy place, their sacrifices of praise and of intercession for the world. As His anointed, He no longer dwells *with* His Church, as when manifested in the flesh He made atonement and fulfilled all righteousness. He dwells *in* it, imparting to every true member of it the righteousness which is of God by faith, thus continuing His life in the Church which is His body, and fulfilling through it the Divine purpose of reconciling all things in heaven and on earth. So Sinai's covenant was fulfilled in the descent of the Holy Ghost, superseding the revelation of law by the communication of the spirit of life which renders law unnecessary, and thereby consecrating the Church for the redemption of the world. It is indeed a high vocation for the Church called forth from a sinful race to be brought so nigh to God ; and yet a higher calling and more transcendent privileges await its members. For though the stage represented by the first division of the Tabernacle is ended, and the Church is passing through that symbolised by the

second, the stage typified by the third division is not reached. In the Holy place we are looking towards an innermost sanctuary which we cannot penetrate, as the goal of all aspiration and the eternal fountain of all our good. The institutions which bring most forcibly to our souls the reality of the Divine Presence and of our Divine communion, only awaken consciousness that it "doth not yet appear what we shall be." We are still before the veil, which separates us from that inmost shrine into which our Forerunner hath entered ; but yet "a little while," and the separating veil shall be behind us. Then we shall know the full joy of service and the whole glory of God's secret, for "we shall see His face and His name shall be on our foreheads."¹

To these high spiritual ends, the constructors of the Tabernacle contributed, though they could not conceive what has been revealed to us upon whom "the ends of the world have come." In like manner, and as unconsciously, in the institution of the priesthood did they minister unto us the things of God's salvation. Before the Mosaic age, a priest "kohen," "hiereus," "sacerdos," in the sense in which the word is generally used, did not exist among the Hebrews. As among all peoples in the patriarchal stage of history, religious functions were exercised by the head of the family for himself, and for all the members of it. In the Passover—the first occasion upon which the tribes are found performing a common religious function—the father or house-

¹ Westcott, *Com. on Hebrews*, p. 240 ; Herzog, *Ency.*, vol. iii. 2289.

holder is the celebrant, though immediately after in the narrative, a hint is given of the first-born being devoted to religious service. The Hebrews like other Semitic peoples recognised, in the preference given in regard to inheritance and superior authority, the prerogatives and probably the sanctity of the first-born.¹ Moses appears to have utilised the belief by employing the first-born, "the young men,"² in the solemn ceremonial which marked the conclusion of the Covenant. It was natural that he should do so in a period of transition ; but when the old patriarchal order had wholly passed away, a very different institution was required to weld the tribes into a nation, and to train them to understand the solemn responsibilities which they had to confess they could not discharge as the peculiar people of Jehovah.

In Egypt, Moses had come into very close relations with a priesthood very different from that represented by the head of a family, or by the head of a clan like Melchizedec or Jethro. His training under them, his observation of the immunities and dignities which they enjoyed, and specially of their high culture in relation to all other classes of the people, may have prepared him for the reception of the idea of what a people consecrated to Jehovah ought to be in relation to the rest of mankind. When it became apparent that Israel was not fitted to realise that idea, and when the necessity emerged for a priesthood which would be to the nation what the nation was intended to have been to mankind, it is probable that through Egypt was furnished the

¹ Genesis xxv. 29-34 ; xlix. 3.

² Exod. xxiv. 5.

suggestion of the institution which was destined so powerfully to mould the character and shape the history of the chosen people. Yet the priesthood in Israel was no graft from the religion of Egypt. Just as we use the letters of the alphabet to express very contradictory thoughts, so the external details of a religion with which the tribes were familiar were employed to separate them from its essential idolatry.¹ The Israelite priesthood, very unlike the Egyptian in many respects, was specially contrasted to it in its original intention; for whereas the Egyptian fenced off and defended the people from deity by ceremonies and sacrifices, the Hebrew priest was ordained as a mediator, through whom, under Divine regulations, the people could draw nigh to Deity.

The development of the sacerdotal institution in Israel, according to Scripture, was gradual. The order of that development, and the length of time required to complete the system described in Leviticus—with its gradations of High Priests, Aaronites, and Levites—are questions which do not fall to be discussed in this lecture. What we have to consider is, the fundamental idea upon which the priesthood was based, and which was expressed by the functions which they discharged. It is said that this cannot be determined with certainty from the name “Kohen,”² for the primary meaning of its

¹ Smith, *Dict. of the Bible*, vol. ii. p. 916; Spencer, *De Leg. Rit. Heb.* ciii. 1, 5, 11; Wilkinson, *Ancient Egypt*, vol. iii. p. 116.

² Ewald connects it with “hêcîn,” “to put in order or arrange (a sacrifice)”; Bähr,

(*Symb.* ii. 15), traces it to an Arabic root signifying “to draw near”; Prof. Robertson Smith identifies it with “kahin,” the Arabic for soothsayer, and would develop out of this functionary the priest in his highest office, as

root is disputed and doubtful. Whatever may have been the original etymology of the word, or whatever changes may have occurred in its significance in times before the Pentateuch was produced, there can be no mistake as to the conception of a priest, as set forth in Exodus and Leviticus. He was one who, through ordination and consecration, had been "brought near" to Jehovah—whose function was to come near to Jehovah, to receive blessings not peculiar to himself, but intended for the people for whom he mediated. In the estimation of the authors of the Pentateuch, an Israelite priest was no "soothsayer";¹ it was no part of his functions to serve as augur or diviner. Even the Urim and Thummim were only emblematic of the authority with which he was invested as judge or decider of difficult cases.² Nor was he, like the heathen, the

described in Leviticus as the revealer (see Plumptre in Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, art. "Priest"; and also Herzog, *Encycl.*).

¹ Montefiore, *Hibbert Lecture*, pp. 66, 68, 104.

² In ancient Egypt the chief judge wore, during his official duties, a golden chain round his neck, to which a golden figure representing the goddess of Truth, studded with precious stones of various colours was suspended (Wilkinson, *Manners of Ancient Egypt*, vol. ii. p. 24). The High Priest of Israel wore the breastplate, studded with stones representing the twelve tribes. Antiquarians are divided as to whether the Urim and Thummim

were identical with stones in "the breastplate of decision," or were sacred stones, worn in a pouch behind the breastplate, and used for casting the lot. The Urim and Thummim (Sept. *δῆλωσις καὶ ἀλήθεια*, Vulg. *doctrina et veritas*) were only consulted in very extraordinary emergencies. They were not regarded as possessing in themselves any supernatural power; they were sometimes worn for a "memorial" (Exod. xxviii. 29) of Aaron's official holiness and personal enlightenment when called upon to give a decision on some very solemn and critical occasion affecting the theocracy. The inspiration came, not from them,

guardian of any mysteries, or the depositary of any sacred lore.¹ In the Ark, of which he had charge, there were only the tables of the law, the book of the covenant, the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod. All the people knew of its contents, and the law and covenant were expounded to them by the priest, just as the Gospel is interpreted by a Christian preacher. If he possessed higher illumination than the people, he derived it from his greater experience, deeper study, and more constant application to the subject. It is true that, very early in the history of Israel, and indeed all through it, the priests did endeavour, like the heathen priests, to assert their supremacy. But the original idea of Moses condemned them, and in the latest age of the nation, when the influence of the priests was most dominant, the exposition of the sacred law was the acknowledged right of all who had ability and insight ; and so it was that the scribes became more influential than the priests, because more respected and honoured for piety and wisdom.

The description often given of the Israelite priesthood as a hierarchy is inaccurate, or at least it is liable to be misunderstood. Leviticus reflects no hierarchy in the sense in which the word is generally applied, but a genuine theocracy. The law constituted a religious democracy, in which all the people were to be holy to

but from God ; and yet the very sight of the gems, by powerfully reminding him of his awful responsibilities, must have disposed and prepared him for receiving the Divine illumination. (See

Kalisch, *Commentary on Exodus*, pp. 540-45 ; Lightfoot, *Gleanings from Exodus*, vol. ii. pp. 406-7).

¹ Curtiss, *The Levitical Priest*, pp. 57-58 ; Herzog, art. "Priest" in *Encycl.* ; Sykes, *Essay*, p. 211.

Jehovah. The priesthood was rooted in the ideal priesthood of the people, and it was designed to promote their sanctification as a people brought nearer to Jehovah than other nations. An Israelite and his priest differed not in respect that the priest only was holy, but in the degree of their sanctification, even as the high priest differed from his brother priests. People and priests and high priest were allied by one vocation and covenant; so, in making atonement for the people, the priests had to perform similar offices for themselves. One with the people in nature, they differed from them in respect of calling; and to their vocation, not to themselves, was the holiness of their consecration attached. It was due solely to their Divine election. The nation was chosen out of all other nations, not because they were holy, but in order that they might become so; and in like manner the priests were consecrated unto holiness, not on account of it. The first-born, according to the heathen idea, were naturally holy, but Aaron, his sons, and the Levites were holy by Divine consecration. The rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram—as leaders of the tribe descended from the first-born son of Jacob—may have originated in this belief, and may indicate that the institution had to be established against the natural tendencies of the people. The priesthood, like the tabernacle, and every law and office in Israel, was represented as proceeding from the will of Jehovah. So the holiness attaching to the priesthood was not inherent in the men; it was divinely imputed to the office, and therefore the word employed to describe the

ordination or installation of a priest, was the correlative for his sanctification.¹

The ceremonial for their consecration, and that for the "purification of the sons of Levi,"² clearly exhibit the truths of their Divine election and their representative character. Most unlike the Egyptian ritual,³ there was no secret initiation, and no mysteries were celebrated apart. The whole transactions were witnessed by the congregation who, assembled in the court before the Lord, could understand each symbolic detail. Through all the successive stages of the solemn rites—repeated for seven days for themselves, till on the eighth day they began to exercise sacerdotal functions for others—both they and the people were instructed that, for the rest of their lives, Jehovah had separated and brought them near to Himself. Not for their sakes, nor for any righteousness that was in them, had He done so; but that by convincing them of their own sinfulness, and bringing them into quick sympathy with their sinful brethren, they might confess their common guilt, and express their self-surrender and their longing for reconciliation. The multitude of regulations affecting their persons, dress, relations, and manner of life, all exhibited the idea of a life consecrated for the sanctification of others, which was set forth in their ordination. As singled out from their brethren, and as belonging to Jehovah the Holy One for the service of their brethren, they had

¹ Exod. xxix. 1-37; Levit. viii. 1-36.

² Priests were "*consecrated*," Levites were "*purified*."

³ See description of consecration of Lucius from Apuleius; Warburton, *Div. Leg. of Moses*, book ii. sect. 4.

to observe prohibitions from which ordinary Israelites were free, and to perform duties which were not exacted from others. Like the sacrificial victims which they offered, they had to be physically perfect; their legitimacy was guaranteed by their genealogy, so that the distinctive mark of a priest, not of Aaron's line, was his being "without father, without mother." Their choice of a wife was carefully restricted, and by a very stringent and minute code their external purity was secured. By infringing the very slightest of these regulations, "they profaned the holiness of the Lord."¹ But above all, their chief duty was to lead a life of exemplary righteousness and piety, for it was Jehovah's will that "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me."² So absorbed were they expected to be in their great spiritual mission of instructing the people in Jehovah's law, of blessing them in His name, and of reconciling them to each other, that personal affliction and calamity were not to be allowed to interrupt or hinder their service, for "the Lord was their portion."

If every detail of the law for the priests was a symbol impressing the coarsest nature with the fact that privileges of closer access to Jehovah in official service involved them in severer moral and spiritual responsibilities than rested upon their fellow-men, the same lesson was more powerfully taught by the ceremonial for the ordination of the High Priest, and by the regulations to which ever after he had to conform. He was the pattern Israelite, representing what a divinely-elected Israel should be. It

¹ Levit. xxi. 6-8, and 17-23.

² Levit. x. 3.

was his intercession before the Mercy-Seat that rendered effective the priest's intercession before the veil. The priest mediated for the people as individuals or in groups, but in the High Priest the whole nation was embodied as its vicar. So, because his responsibilities were greater than were the priests', and because there were solemn functions which he alone could discharge, the rites for his consecration were more impressive, and the insignia of his office more splendid and symbolic. The rules for his manner of living were stricter, and the prescriptions for his ceremonial purity were more severe. He was forbidden to approach the corpse of his father or mother, and to express grief for their death in compliance with the ordinary custom of mourning. More than the priests, he was expected upon the most disquieting occasions, to preserve serenity of soul, to rise above the disturbing influences alike of joy and sorrow,¹ and to walk before the people as always conscious of the Presence of the Holiest. For "the crown of the anointing oil of his God was upon him." Holiness to the Lord was engraved upon his mitre, a perpetual memorial to himself and to others, that he only lived "to bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their sacred gifts, that they may be accepted before the Lord."²

It was a magnificent ideal, a grand endeavour to sanctify the many by the consecration of the few, that the nation might be a blessing to all nations. It failed, not because it was wrongly conceived, but because of the nature of the materials with which its originator

¹ Levit. xxi. 10-12 ; compare Ezek. xliv. 20.

² Exod. xxviii. 38.

had to work. Two qualifications were essential to the perfect realisation of this mediatorial ideal, and these neither priest nor high priest in Israel ever possessed. The first and fundamental requirement was perfect sinlessness, and yet the history of Israel shows that the priests when not foremost were always deeply involved in national transgression and apostasy. The "sanctifiers," who were ordained to bring the people near to Jehovah, were frequently their tempters and corrupters to lead them away from Him. Even the purest of them, who bore the iniquities of the nation most heavily, and confessed them with the sincerest contrition, had to make atonement for themselves as laden with sin and compassed with infirmity. The other requirement, involved in the first, is perfect sympathy, qualifying men to mediate between the Holy Jehovah and the ignorant and sinful, with absolute pity. It is matter of history that as the nation became consolidated the priesthood of Israel were not characterised by this virtue, though some shining exceptions undoubtedly occurred. Yet even if all along the line they had conspicuously displayed it, such compassion as is required for a perfect priest no man who has sinned, no member of a fallen race, could possibly feel. The purity of the purest is sullied, and his pity is blunted by his sin, and in consequence man at his very best is either too rigorous in his verdict upon the sinner, or too lenient in his judgment upon the sin. Therefore man at his best is unable either to show mercy to pardon or grant grace to help. To enable him effectively to mediate between God and the race, so as

to do justice to both, he would require to stand in essential union with both. Thus only could he represent man to God with the efficacy of perfect sympathy, and with the efficacy of perfect holiness represent God to man.¹

So the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews instructs us that the typical significance of the priesthood in Israel was its failure to realise the Divine ideal. He considered the older kind of priest—the patriarchal Melchizedec, who in his name and united offices symbolised the ideal priest-king—a better type than was Aaron of the great high priest of our profession. The high priest whom humanity needs must not only be perfectly sinless and sympathetic, he must also be as perfectly able as he is perfectly willing to save. He must have power and authority to accomplish as king whatever as priest he may desire.² Such a high priest as becomes us we have found in Christ, who, although no priest like Aaron, no king like Melchizedec, has yet exhibited in himself the reality of which at their very best these priests could only furnish the shadow. He was Priest of God most High, because as Son of God most High He consecrated every attribute of His pre-existence to doing His Father's will, even to becoming Son of Man. Then having proved His faithfulness as a son in the house in which Moses was faithful as a servant, by purging our sin, and by writing—through the power of the Eternal Spirit—God's law upon hearts that love to obey it, He passed into the heavenlies to fulfil not *before*,

¹ Westcott, *Christus Con.*, pp. 41-44 ; also *Com. Hebrews*, p. 20.

² Milligan, *The Ascen. of our Lord*, p. 95, the Baird Lecture for 1891.

but *upon* the throne, the mediation at which all priesthood aims. So, in the sinless Son of Man, the only begotten Son of God, we have a High Priest—not *made* like the Aaronic priesthood after a carnal commandment, but *manifested* in the power of an endless or indissoluble life — exercising functions “in which He never had a predecessor and never can have a successor.” It is His office not to approach God with sacrifices of atonement, but to mediate from God the blessings of the one atonement once for all made, and to mediate from man his everlasting oblation of all possible praise for the same. Then in Him we have a High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, because He was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Westcott has truly remarked that “the very saintliest of a sinful race can know only in part by the experience of defeat the power of temptation, but Christ by experience of perfect victory over it” felt its power to the uttermost. His pity, is thus the tenderest of all pity, because He alone realised the full significance of sin, and so His help is the strongest, as able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God through Him.

From consideration of the Tabernacle and its ministers we pass naturally to examine the prominent features of its sacrificial worship. As described in the Pentateuch it also shows us ideals which, only projected in the ordinances of the old economy, have been fully realised in the facts of the new one. The injunction of sacrificial worship in the religion of a people so prone

to idolatry as the Israelites were, implies a Divine acknowledgment of a temporary necessity for it. It confronts us therefore in the Pentateuch not as a survival of heathenism, but as a providential discipline designed to defend and withdraw from idolatry a people who were very prone to it.¹ Its ritual from the first is represented as being essentially symbolic in its substance and intention.² Its earliest authors, and others who helped to develop it, are described occasionally as explaining its significance. It is a notable fact that while demanding diligent observance of that ritual of sacrifice and offering, they as unfailingly demanded with it true repentance from sin and surrender to the will of Jehovah. The whole ceremonial law both in its scope and details, harmonised with the teaching of the prophets, and may be said to have suggested the ideas and furnished illustrations for those truths which in the prophetic Scriptures are now considered most spiritual. Unlike all other religions whose ceremonial observances were invariably contradicted or set at naught by the higher teaching of the wise, in the religion of Israel the Law and the Prophets run parallel for their mutual confirmation and support.³

Of the three classes of offerings recognised by the Law—the *first*, comprising all gifts dedicated to the erection and maintenance of the sanctuary; the *second*, all dues

¹ In the Pentateuch, sacrificial worship is assumed as required by man's necessities, but it is purified, regulated, limited, and so is distinguished from heathen sacrificial worship not only, as Well-

hausen, *Proleg.* p. 54, avers, in respect of the Being to whom it is offered, but also by the manner in which it was offered.

² Philo, *De Victim*, c. 53.

³ Kalisch, *Com. on Levit.*, p. xiii.

and tithes rendered to Jehovah as King, and applied to the support of priests and Levites—we have only to consider the *third* class, which comprehended all offerings presented at the altar and consumed wholly or in part upon it. The significance or intention of all these altar sacrifices was obviously identical with that of the sacrifices of Abraham and Noah and Abel. Mosaic and Levitical worship is represented as being practically patriarchal worship more fully developed and more clearly exhibited.¹

¹ Taking the Pentateuch for our authority, we find that it describes a historical development of sacrifice, different from, and opposed to, some old theories recently revived and some new ones recently started by Biblical critics. Following the lead of Plato (*De Legg.*, vi. 22), and Porphyry (*De Abstin.*, ii. 5, 22), Knobel and others represent the first sacrifices as eucharistic and as consisting only of the fruits of the earth. Proceeding from nearly the same point, others represent the first sacrifice as one of peace offerings connected with social feasting, such as is described by Homer (*Iliad*, i. 458, ii. 421, xi. 770), and very recently Professor Robertson Smith has professed to find the origin of these peace offerings in the very savage rites which we have above described. The Bible account is quite opposed to both sets of theories. Cain, it is true, brought of the fruit of the ground unto the Lord an offering, “mincha,” a word in this case covering Abel’s

animal offering, though under the Law restricted to vegetable or meat offerings as opposed to “zebach,” a slaughtered victim. Noah’s sacrifice consisted of burnt offerings, “olah,” that which mounts, or “ishshah,” that which is burnt. Sometimes “káleel,” “whole,” because the entire sacrifice was consumed. Abraham took part, as we have seen, in a very solemn covenant sacrifice, but all the other references indicate that he offered only burnt offerings. In the sacrifices offered by Jacob at Mizpah on his reconciliation with Laban (Gen. xxxi. 54), and again at Beersheba, on his journey to Egypt, we have the first recorded peace offerings, “shelamin,” in the Bible narrative. Jethro offered both burnt offerings and peace offerings when he met Moses and the tribes in the desert (Exod. xviii. 12), an indication of the similarity, if not identity, which subsisted between the religious belief and worship of the two branches of the Semitic stock. It recalls the earlier in-

Jehovah, to whom an Israelite sacrificed, would never regard the offering in itself; nor could the offerer ever hope to be accepted for the sake of his gift. Indeed, the offering was not left to the offerer to determine, for in every case the nature and amount of it were exactly prescribed, and to exceed the prescription was regarded as truly as a sacrilege as was the refusal to comply with

cident of the meeting of Abraham and Melchizedec.

According to the Bible, the most ancient form of sacrifice, in which the root idea of all sacrifice is to be sought, is virtually the burnt offering. Even in Abel's sacrifice, though called "mincha," and not said to be burned, special reference is made to the fat of his victim (Genesis iv. 4), which may have been left "before the Lord," but certainly was not partaken of by the sacrificer. The offering, as we have interpreted it, was eucharistic, but as expressing the entire surrender to God in faith of the penitent offerer. Evidently this is the foundation fact on which the whole system of Biblical sacrifice rests, viz. the complete surrender of the worshipper to God's will and God's way of salvation. In Homeric writings the peace offerings are the earliest, and no distinct mention is made of the burnt offering by any classical author earlier than Xenophon (*Anab.*, vii. 8, sect. 4; *Cyrop.*, viii. 3, 24). In patriarchal times there is no special reference to the sin offering, "chatta-ath," though, as we have

observed, the ideas from which it sprung into form were all there, germinating in the religious consciousness till the revelation at Sinai called them forth. The sin offering, and its cognate offering, the trespass offering, "āsham," are to be regarded as institutions of the Law, for by the Law was the knowledge or consciousness of sin to be stimulated. And so, doubtless, as under its discipline this consciousness grew in strength, the sacrificial ritual would be modified and elaborated to give adequate expression to it, till it culminated in the solemn and significant ceremonial of the great day of atonements. In the first chapters in Leviticus, the order in which the kinds of sacrifice are presented agrees with the historical succession as traced in Genesis, and the whole indicates that in the mind of the authors of the Pentateuch, patriarchal sacrifice, originating in conceptions of man's relation to Deity quite opposed to those of heathendom, was the root out of which naturally the whole system of Levitical sacrifice grew.

it. This was regulated not according to the mere ability of the offerer; but partly by the occasion of the sacrifice and mainly by his position in the theocracy as layman, or prince, or priest. It was so arranged that the very poorest, in offering a pigeon, or, where that was impossible, the tenth part of an ephah of meal, was equal with the wealthiest in respect of privilege and responsibility. It was manifestly the intention of the whole law to testify that offering sacrifice was a spiritual service expressive of the thankful dependence of a sinful people upon Jehovah, and of their loyal submission to His will.¹ So it was that the offering had to consist of materials in essential connexion with the offerer. It must be his own property duly acquired or earned in the sweat of his brow, in the exercise of an honest calling, and such as could be used for his sustenance. All edible game or fish which man did not rear, all fruits which he did not cultivate, all products like honey which had grown ready to his hand, the very materials which were most

¹ There was no restriction as to *gifts* which might be freely dedicated to the sanctuary, but *dues* were restricted to the produce of agriculture and grazing. The gradation in the value of the victims is manifest in the ordinances as to the sin offering. For the high priest and for the whole nation a bullock was required (Levit. xvi. 3, 6-11); for the prince or chief of the people a male kid (Levit. xxiii. 19; Num. xxix. 5-11), and for the common people a female kid or lamb sufficed

(Levit. iv. 28). The ram was the thank-offering of the nation or of its chief, but never of a common layman, save as a trespass offering (Levit. v. 4) to expiate a violation of the rights of property. The lamb was required for the daily public burnt offering, and for private sin, trespass, and purification offerings. Pigeons represented the staple animal food of the poor; they were very abundant in Palestine and easily procurable by all.

freely presented in heathen sacrifice, were unacceptable at the altar of Jehovah. The offerings must be productions into which the personal life and energy of the offerer had flowed, and which as God's gifts were necessary to strengthen him for carrying out his vocation. So the domestic animals which he had reared and tended, the wine and the oil which he had pressed, the grain which he had sown and reaped and threshed—God's gifts received through daily labour—were the appropriate sacramental elements in ordinances through which communion with Jehovah could be obtained. The reality of an industrious life of a people dependent upon Jehovah for strength to labour, and for labour's reward and increase, is clearly mirrored in the Bible law of sacrifice.

All altar sacrifices were ranged into two divisions of bleeding or animal, bloodless or vegetable sacrifices. These vegetable offerings—which acquired all their virtue from the animal sacrifices with which they were associated—were divided into such as were consumed upon the altar in the court, and such as were distributed on the threefold altar in the holy place. The animal sacrifices were divided into sin and trespass offerings, expressive of contrition and penitence; burnt offerings, expressive of submission and consecration; and peace offerings, expressive of gratitude and communion.¹ If we properly consider the ritual for the offering of these sacrifices, and

¹ Another class consisting of purification offerings may be included in the first class, they sym-

bolised and marked return to a state of communion after lapse from it by reason of uncleanness.

especially if we observe "the elements and actions" which gave them all their efficacy, we shall see how they also served with the sanctuary and its ministers as shadows and figures of the grace wherein we stand.

We have noted that among very barbarous peoples - communion in the blood of the victim was the highest act of sacrifice, but upon no occasion could an Israelite partake of blood without being guilty of sacrilege.¹ Upon all sacrificial occasions the blood immediately

¹ In Genesis, though the sacredness of blood is distinctly stated in the law of Noah (Genesis ix. 4) there is no trace of any special treatment of the blood of the victims in sacrificing. The peculiar significance attached to it, and specially to its manipulation, is in Exodus ascribed to Moses, the prophet of the religion of Jehovah. This also, like the sin offering, was due to the sense of sin which the revelation of the law of the Holy One roused into deeper intensity in the Israelites. In the Passover the power of pure sacrificial blood to *protect from judgment* was shown forth, and at Sinai its power in connexion with the burnt offerings and peace offerings of the covenant to *consecrate* for a priestly mission and to *qualify for near approach* to Jehovah, was exhibited. It was only under the law that they learned its power to *atone*, or *cover sin*. This power was recognised in every form of sacrifice under the law, but only subordi-

nately in the burnt offering and the peace offering. (In meat offerings of course blood had no place, but these offerings derived all their efficacy from their connexion with the animal sacrifices with which they were offered.) It was in connexion with the sin offering that its sacrificial meaning was most prominently brought to view. It was both the *symbol* and the *vehicle* of life; "the soul = life of the flesh, is in the blood" (Lev. xvii. 11); "the soul = life of all flesh is its blood with its soul = life" (ver. 14), *i.e.* its blood and life is soul together, and this *life*, this immaterial principle which survives death, was given to make an atonement for man's soul. Heathen writers, specially Greek and Roman ones, may have observed the intimate connexion of life with the blood (see instances quoted by De Maistre, *Eclaircissements sur les sacrifices*, and Von Lassaulx, *Die Sühnopfer der Griechen und Römer und ihr Verhältniss zu dem einen auf Gol-*

after the slaughter of the victim was solemnly applied to the altar. The use thus made of it marked not a sacramental act of communion with Jehovah, but a divinely-appointed means of removing a hindrance in the way of such communion. Very definite ideas of what prevented communion are set forth in the law. The Israelite felt that before communion was possible the obstacle caused by his sin must be surmounted. The law of sacrifice originated in this feeling, and was designed to meet this necessity. It was an earnest endeavour to control and educate the religious instinct, which the sense of sin might have driven into frantic extravagance, by a symbolic act, designed to pacify the conscience of a penitent by teaching him that his iniquity was forgiven and his sin was covered. The covering of sin therefore was the first blessing to be gained by sacrifice; the ultimate aim of sacrifice was to secure reconciliation with Jehovah, yet this was only possible by the act of atonement or covering. Not that sin was supposed by covering to be compensated for; not that the covered sin was regarded

gotha); but we find no trace of this knowledge of the physiological truth, so distinctly and so consistently set forth in Leviticus. The very significant connexion, moreover, in which it is there set forth is a refutation of the theories which would evolve the pure Biblical ideas of sacrifice from the beliefs which inspired heathen and barbarous sacrificial rites. We find in several religions that sacrificial blood was regarded as the portion of the demons, or applied

to propitiate hostile powers, or as a magical charm to heal. The savage, moreover, drank it or ate it in the living flesh to be stronger, but neither in savagery nor in civilised heathendom do we find any trace of the blood as the vehicle and seat of life either being conceived of or used as it was in connexion with the ritual of Israel as represented in the Pentateuch. Compare *The Speaker's Commentary on Leviticus*, pp. 504-8, 597.

as having never been committed, or that it was represented afterwards as having no existence. That was impossible; but by covering sin, it was deprived of its power to come between man and Jehovah. Its accusatory power was destroyed or rendered impotent by penitential application of the blood of a proper victim to the altar and its horns. Blood, as we have seen, was not the symbol of death; it was the vehicle of soul or life. "The soul of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the soul."¹

For the covering of the sin of accountable man, the life of an unblemished victim—irresponsible indeed but sinless—was required. The offerer, with great solemnity and intense energy of soul, consecrated or ordained it to vicarious sacrifice by pressing with both hands heavily upon its head,² then having slaughtered it as

¹ Leviticus xvii. 11; Kalnis, i. p. 271.

² The idea of the ceremony was dedication, not in the sense of making over property, but in that of instituting to some office. The interpretation given by some of the rabbins and the early Christian fathers, that it expressed as in the Egyptian rites the transfer to the victim of the guilt or evil from which the offerer prayed to be forgiven, is too narrow to account for all applications of the ceremony. Its meaning would vary in every one of the different

kinds of sacrifice, for it indicated that sacred moment "when the sacrificer laid all the feeling which gushed from him, in the sin offering the feeling of contrition, in the burnt offering the feeling of submission, and in the thank-offering the feeling of gratitude in fullest glow, upon the head of the creature whose blood or life was to appear for him before Jehovah." It thus became his substitute, as the Levites were substituted as vicars of the first-born, and the action gave expression to the prayer, "In my

quickly and painlessly as possible by his own hand, the priest, the mediator of Jehovah's saving grace, at once by his action qualified its life-blood for the atoning or covering office. For neither in itself, nor by the act of consecration of the offerer, was the life in the blood qualified to cover. It acquired its atoning efficacy when it was brought by the priest into contact with the altar, the place where Jehovah came near to His people to bless them.¹ The application of the blood was never represented as man's way of appeasing Jehovah, nor as a Divine exaction from sinful man meriting death. On the contrary, it was set forth as a means of grace devised and provided by Jehovah, so that through it He might reach and bestow His forgiveness upon His creatures. It was only and purely symbolic, for the substitution was manifestly insufficient; there was no real union between the offerer and his victim, which was only his property, and not his equal. Its death was involuntary, and though sinless it was only so as being beneath the sphere in which sin was possible. In no way therefore could its death be accounted as expiation procured by man for his guilt. Upon man's part it meant confession that death was his due as a sinner, and that sinless life could alone cover the sin in his life. Upon Jehovah's part it was a foreshadowing of the truth that one Holy Life united with Him in absolute surrender is a real source of purification

sacrifice behold myself." (Ewald, *Sacrificial Worship*, p. 83.)
Alter., p. 47; Oehler, *Old Testament Theology*, i. p. 627; Kurtz,

¹ Exodus xx. 24.

and reconciliation. Still, while the symbol pacified the conscience of all who in simple faith grasped through it the promised pardon, the real substitution upon which the pardon was based could not be perceived, even by those whose perpetual prayer was "Lord, open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law."¹

When the sprinkling of the blood was completed, the ceremonial passed into another stage, in which were assumed the bloodless sacrifices, the corn and wine and oil, which like flesh were the food of man. Of the sacrificial victim only the choicest portions, save in the case of the whole burnt offering, were devoted to the altar, and these with the meat and drink offerings were consumed by fire as the "Bread" or "Food of Jehovah."² Not that any observer of the Levitical ordinances ever dreamed of offering food to Jehovah in the heathen sense. Had this been the understanding, the range of selection of the materials would, as in heathendom, have been greatly extended, and would certainly have included leaven, which makes bread more palatable, and honey, which in the East was considered a choice delicacy.³ The offerings were presented to an invisible King, who was not to be conceived of under any corporeal conditions; but yet as regarding

¹ Oehler, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. i. p. 417; Kurtz, *Sacrificial Worship*, p. 122.

² Leviticus iii. 11-16; xxi. 6-8; xvii. 22, 25; Numbers xxviii. 2.

³ Hence the "sweet food of the gods," which they eagerly desire. —Porphyry, *De Abstin.*, ii. 19; Euseb., *Præp. Evang.*, iv. 20; Spencer, *De Leg. Heb.*, lib. ii. xi. 2.

hunger and thirst for reconciliation with Himself as His delight. Man, according to the Deuteronomist, liveth not by bread alone,¹ but by the words of Jehovah; and Jehovah required of His worshippers not their material gifts, but the trustful and loving surrender to Him which these betokened. The offerings, as all required for man's sustenance and as the products of his industry and skill, symbolised the consecrated fruits of man's consecrated service of Jehovah, and this, from first to last, is represented in Scripture as an offering of a sweet-smelling savour, required and desired by the God of salvation.²

The burning of the offerings upon the altar must not be understood as having any symbolic reference to suffering and destruction as the due penalty of sin.³ The Hebrew word designating destructive burning ("saraph") is not employed, but one signifying to "cause to steam" or "smoke" ("hiktir"). The burning marked their complete surrender to Jehovah, but it also indicated their acceptance by Jehovah as well pleasing. He took no pleasure in the death of the wicked; and had the altar fire been regarded as the symbol of wrath, the vapour from the victim would never have been described as a "sweet smell," as it is in the regularly recurring formula for an acceptable sacrifice.⁴ The altar fire is

¹ Deut. viii. 3.

³ De Maistre, *Eclaircissements sur les sacrifices*, p. 234.

² Hengst., *Diss. on Pent.*, vol. ii. pp. 531-2; Kurtz, *Sacrificial Worship of the Old Testament*, pp. 62-3, 161.

⁴ Lev. i. 9, iv. 31, xiii. 7; Herzog, *Encycl.*, x. p. 633; Edersheim, *The Temple, its Ministry and Services*, p. 91.

always represented as Jehovah's fire, and as having originally descended from heaven to consume the first sacrifice of Aaron, His anointed priest. Therefore it must never be allowed to go out, but must be continually nourished by sacrifice. From it the sacred fire used for the offering of incense appears to have been taken,¹ and by its use as proceeding from Jehovah Himself there was symbolised the truth that He accepts and perfects every sacrifice that has been offered in the right spirit and in the appointed way. The altar fire, like the more terrible flames of Sinai, was a perpetual reminder of the holiness of Jehovah. To approach it in a profane spirit was dangerous in the extreme, for Jehovah, who was "a glory to His sanctified," was a "devouring flame" to His enemies and "a terror to the hypocrite and sinful."²

The altar fire purified and transformed the sacrifice of every worshipper who put the devotion of his whole being into his offering, and he, instead of being impoverished by its destruction in relation to himself, was enriched by the sense of the Divine favour and fellowship. Admitted to the table of Jehovah, he and his family, and the poorer Levites, after the priests' portion had been removed, partook of the rest of the victim in a hearty love-feast before the Lord. It was now Jehovah's gift to him, and a token of a blessing, which, as too large for himself to contain, was to overflow to others, even for the refreshment of the poor and needy. In it was exhibited the highest sacramental point in the whole process of

¹ Lev. x. ; Oehler, *Old Test. Theol.*, i. p. 421.

² Cp. Isaiah x. 17, and xxxiii. 14 ; Mal. iv. 1.

the sacrifice, the progressive development of which from the sprinkling of the blood, through the burning of the victim, to the festal meal, becomes to us an object lesson in the fundamentals of Christian theology.

The lesson is more clearly and emphatically taught when we observe the distinctive features and the order of succession of the different classes of Levitical sacrifice. Generally speaking, they may be arranged according to their objects, as sin and trespass offerings, burnt offerings, and peace offerings. Frequently these were combined in one solemn function, and upon such occasions the sin offering preceded the burnt offering, which was succeeded by the peace offering. This order seems to indicate their gradation in rank, as does also the designation "most holy," applied to the sin offering, while the peace offering is simply called "a holy thing."¹ The distinction in the rituals for each of them is also significant. The presentation, the imposition of hands, and the slaughtering by the offerer, were the same in all; but in the remaining functions, such as the application of the blood and the disposal of the victim, there were characteristic differences. In each one of the three kinds of sacrifice one action was peculiarly emphasised. The application of the blood was the culminating point in the sin offering, the burning the main point in the burnt offering, and the characteristic point in the peace offering was the sacrificial meal. The purpose of each of these sacrifices as disclosed by these different actions, was clearly per-

¹ Lev. vi. 18-22.

ceptible by an Israelite. The application to the altar of the blood of the sin offering was to cover and atone sin ; the ascending smoke instructed him in the duty of entire surrender to Jehovah ; and the sacrificial meal was the seal of the earnestly desired reconciliation with Him. Atonement by Jehovah, consecration to Jehovah, communion with Jehovah, these were the three great articles of faith which lay at the root, and vitalised the whole system of Levitical worship. It required the lapse of ages to unfold the Divine realities of which they were the figures ; yet by means of them the believing Israelite entered into essentially the same worship by which our spiritual life is now nourished and consoled. Although what seemed to them finality is found by us to be only a stage in a continuous development not yet completed, we feel that we can touch hands with them across the gulf of centuries, as comprehended with ourselves in the "common salvation."

Though all Hebrew sacrifices are related to our subject, as involving a consciousness of sin in the sacrificer and of the necessity for atonement to secure his reconciliation with Jehovah, one class, peculiarly Hebrew, bears very directly and specially upon it. The sin and trespass offerings, altogether unknown in heathen religions, were under the Levitical code demanded not because of sin in general, but on account of its specific manifestations and effects. To ascertain their functions we have first to discover what were the breaches of the covenant which they were ordained to atone. They were presented (1) in the offices for the

purification of the unclean ; (2) in those required for the atonement of specific offences against the law ; and (3) in those demanded for the atonement of undefined sins. In regard to the first class, there were according to the Law certain physical conditions which made it sacrilege for those who were subject to them to approach the sanctuary. The enactments concerning them vividly recall beliefs very widely spread at a certain stage of human experience ; but here again, under apparent similarities in the rites associated with them, there was direct contradiction in their real significance and intention. The idea and motive in the Levitical injunctions was purely religious. Their object was not to promote sound physical health in the community, though they tended to secure it, but to stamp upon certain human experiences a significance which confirmed belief in the doctrine promulgated in the very opening of the Pentateuch, namely, that man's present condition is not his natural and original one, but one abnormal and fallen. The impurity of leprosy and of death, the uncleanness associated with the begetting and bearing of children, all suggest the consequences of the Fall. It appears to be a legitimate inference therefore that the Levitical doctrine of ceremonial uncleanness was a recognition of the depravity of the natural man ; and if so, then it was an indispensable antecedent to the proper worship of Jehovah that provision should be made for the cleansing of consequences of sin clinging to men in virtue of the law of heredity.¹

¹ Cave, *Script. Doct. of Sacr.*, p. 100 ; Keil, *Arch. Trans.*, vol. i. p. 378.

The sin offerings in the second division were presented for the atonement of specific sins in certain well-defined instances. They were demanded from the High Priest, from the Ruler, from the Nation, and from the ordinary Israelite, when through ignorance, error, rashness, or frailty they had transgressed. Those in the third class, presented upon prominent festivals on behalf of the nation, were not occasioned by special sins, but were intended to atone all the unnoted transgressions which produce the sense of sinfulness in a people, who, though covenanted, were prone to transgress through inherent or hereditary frailty or through force of habit. All these sin offerings therefore sprang from that consciousness of moral depravity which has always proved an unfailing source of aspiration after spiritual improvement. What was aimed at by them was not external cleansing but inward purity, the removal of what was felt to be morally offensive to Jehovah. They were efficacious as atoning transgressions into which men had lapsed through not being sufficiently watchful against fallen human nature. In the case of presumptuous sins, proceeding not from frailty but from deliberate defiance of the Divine authority, no atonement was provided. Forgiveness was extended to the imperfection but not to the perversity of human nature; to unintentional transgressions due to human corruption, but never to wanton impiety; and the essential condition of obtaining that forgiveness was inward repentance. The atonement which sealed and pledged forgiveness to the penitent was Jehovah's gracious gift. He alone could indicate the way and provide the means

of restoration. So the kind of victim was not left to the option of the offerer, but was prescribed in every case according to the status of the penitent. It was thus invested with a distinctly personal character, being graded, from the ox required from the high priest, to the tenth part of an ephah of meal presented without oil or incense, which sufficed when the Israelite was too poor to procure two pigeons.¹ The sacrificial instinct was thereby restrained at the very point in which in the highest heathen religion it was allowed to run into extravagant excess ; and yet through these ordinances was proclaimed the truth that the higher the theocratic rank and privileges of the transgressor the greater the moral guilt involved in his offence.²

In all the cases, the manipulation of the blood indicated the prominence of the atoning element in the sacrifice. In sin offerings of even the lowest rank, the blood was not dashed against the sides of the altar, but with it the horns, its most sacred part, were carefully anointed with the finger. In the sacrifice for the congregation and for the High Priest, the blood was taken into the Holy place, solemnly smeared upon the horns of the altar of incense, and sprinkled upon the veil, and what remained was carried back and poured out at the base of the altar in the court. In the principal sin offerings on the day of atonements, the act was carried to a still higher point ; for the blood was then taken into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled upon the "Capporeth" or mercy-seat. Again, as ranking among the "most

¹ Lev. iv. and v.

p. 214 ; Magee, *Discourses and*

² Kurtz, *Sacrificial Worship*, Dissert., Dis. xxxvii.

holy" sacrifices, the victims were so disposed of as to shield them from profanation. The priests ate freely of the flesh of the sin offerings of the people when the blood had been applied to the altar horns in the court, not as enjoying an official perquisite, but as fulfilling a mediatorial office. It symbolised the Divine acceptance of the sacrifices, for Jehovah would not otherwise have authorised His servants to partake of them. The priests, however, were not allowed to partake of the sacrifices when blood was offered for or associated with themselves in the Holy place, for in this case they occupied the relation of unholy persons whose sin required atonement. They could not eat of sacrifices which had been brought nigh to Jehovah for them, and so these had to be consumed by burning in a clean place without the camp. The motive in all this was the very opposite of what made the heathen taboo some portions of their sacrifices. In the case of the heathen the object to be gained was to defend themselves from what through contact with the god had become dangerous and even deathful. The intention of the Levitical ordinance was to defend and protect things which had become holy, through being brought nigh to Jehovah, from being profaned by man's own impurity.¹

Associated with the sin offerings, but distinct from

¹ Outram, *De Sacrificiis*, xvii. 1, 2, 3, quoting Porphyry, *De Abstin.*, ii. 44, and Maimonides, *Ad Zebach. in Mishna*, c. 12, interprets the law demanding the burning of the piacular sacrifices by the supposition that they had

become defiled, and communicated pollution to those who burned them. This, however, seems only to be correct in the case of the scapegoat, to be subsequently explained.

them in respect both of enactment and ritual, were the trespass offerings, as *piacula* for offences against Jehovah and man which admitted of compensation. Any violation of a social right was understood to imply infraction of the Divine right. Not only, therefore, was reparation demanded for the transgression of public order, but confession and supplication for pardon had to be made by the transgressor to Jehovah. In some cases where the offence was distinctly traceable to the evil which clings to the nature of man, sin offerings in addition to the trespass offerings were required; the prominent idea in the sin offering was *atonement*, while in the trespass offering it was *satisfaction*. One feature common to both classes was the confession connected with the rites. It is said that imposition of hands "was never used without some form of supplication, and that hence solemn prayers were included under the description of laying on hands" even when not expressly mentioned.¹ It is certain that in all cases of sin and of trespass offerings confession was necessary. "The offerers of sin and of trespass offerings, sacrificed for faults committed with or without knowledge, unless they repent and confess their sins in express words, are not purged by their sacrifices." The more fully the circumstances of the sin were detailed the better in later times was the confession considered, "for he who is frequent and long in confession is worthy of praise."² As trespasses

¹ Outram, *De Sacr.*, xv. 8-12.

ram, *De Sacrificiis*, c. xv., see

² Maimonides quoted by Out-

10, 11, for forms of confession.

against man were considered lighter than offences against Jehovah, His sanctuary and His law, the ceremonial for the trespass offering was less solemn than for the sin offering. The blood for example was only dashed round about the altar, and never applied to the horns, while the flesh was always given to the priests as their portion. The victim never varied, but was the same for all occasions and for all conditions of men. The ram, as among the ancient Greeks and the kindred Italic race, was the *ποινή*¹ generally prescribed, though for the cleansing of the leper and the restoring of a Nazarite who had broken his consecration, a lamb was selected.

The Israelites were thus made to feel that their relation to Jehovah was disturbed and defiled by transgression of any kind. Long and protracted periods of education may have been required before their conceptions of sin and trespass offerings were formulated as they are in the Pentateuch. As their knowledge of God increased, their consciousness of sin, originally crude and undefined, gradually expressed itself in clearer and purer conceptions. The growth, however, of their intelligence did not find its starting-point in

¹ *ποινή*, the price of blood, in the Homeric age was estimated in money, but the ram was the substitute of the shedder of blood. In Israel the ram was always valued by the priest (Lev. v. 15), and as in ancient times the sheep was the ordinary medium for the payment of fine or tribute, the valuation may have been meant

to make it equivalent to the amount of the trespass. In addition to the sacrifice of the ram, valued from two shekels upward, compensation had to be made to the injured person, through the increase of one-fifth. Hengst., *Diss. in Pent.*, vol. ii. p. 176; Keil and Delitzsch, *Pentateuch*, vol. ii. pp. 313-17.

such cosmic ideas of trespass offerings as are represented by the golden mice and emerods with which the Philistines made compensation for the capture of the Ark. Their selection of that peculiar kind of expiatory gift accorded with a widely-spread heathen custom, survivals of which may be seen in the votive offerings hung upon the walls of many a Romish Church. That custom was rooted in the idea that after recovery from illness or rescue from calamity, an image of the member healed, or of the danger from which there had been deliverance, was an offering due to the god that had inflicted the evil or had delivered from it.¹ The purity and simplicity of the Levitical ordinances imply a higher origin than this belief. The trespass offering was not regarded as a fine paid to a ruler, but as an act of confession made to the great Searcher of hearts. The question whether the sin offering developed from the more archaic trespass offering, or whether the trespass offerings were evolved from the sin offering—though most interesting for the Biblical archæologist—does not fall to be discussed here. What we have to note is the high level of thought in regard to sin which through these peculiar Levitical institutions Israel reached. The fact is a very exceptional one in the history of religion. Temporary and imperfect though their ceremonial law was, its administrators succeeded in branding deep upon the popular conscience a true sense of sin—not as a breach of ritual to be made good, not as a debt which might be

¹ Keil and Delitzsch, *Com. on 1 Sam.*, p. 63.

compounded for—but as an offence against the Holy Jehovah, who had chiefly to be reckoned with even in making restitution in cases of social wrong, for He was the only One who could atone and pardon it.

All that Levitical religion was able to effect in regard to the atoning of sin was summed up and embodied in the supreme solemnity of the sacred year, the complete expiation of the priesthood and of the people, of the sanctuary and of its furniture, which had been contaminated by the sinfulness of those who worshipped before, and of those who ministered in it. The description given in Leviticus of the ceremonial of the day of atonements,¹ no doubt represents the form which the celebration had assumed at a date later than the Exile. We may, however, agree with Ewald that its essential features stamp it as “a very ancient rite, a genuine Mosaic festival,” modified in the course of ages.² Days of expiation were common, as we have seen, among very barbarous peoples, and were celebrated by peoples as civilised as were the Egyptians and Romans. The natural inference is that here again the new religion took up a universal and deeply-rooted custom, impressed it with a high moral significance, and devoted it to a purely spiritual purpose. The heathen days of expiation were intended to get rid of physical evils by purely physical means, or to expel malevolent powers by sorcerous or magical rites. In some of the more civilised nations the annual piacula represented the penal satisfaction rendered by the

¹ Leviticus xvi.

² Ewald, *Alterth.*, p. 477.

whole community for some ancient crime. From all these institutions the day of atonements in Israel differed materially, both in respect of the evils to be got rid of, and the means by which they were purged. The evils to be cleansed were all impurities and sins in our sense of the words, and the ritual of cleansing was designed to beget in minds "too crude for reflective modes of exercise," a set of impressions answering to those which we have been trained to form of the holiness of God, and of His willingness to purge away the guilt of all who will be led by Him in the way of salvation.¹

By the sin offering, which had been presented throughout the year, atonement was made of special sins, committed in error or through infirmity, but upon "The Day," the "Sabbath of Sabbaths," the tenth day of the seventh month, atonement was made of "all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins,"² whether known or unknown, whether expiated or not. Upon all the details of its most impressive ritual³ we do not require to dwell, but if we observe some of its principal features, we shall find them symbolic of Israel's expectation of some more effectual method of reconciliation with Jehovah than was provided at the altar of burnt offering in the court, and also some typical guarantees of the great realisation of that expectation, to which we are witnesses.⁴ Characterised by complete cessation of labour

¹ Bushnell, *The Vicarious Sacrifice*, p. 438. ² Lev. xvi. 21.

³ For the Ritual itself see Maimuni Hajad-hachazaka, trans-

lated by Delitzsch in *Comment. on Hebrews*, vol. ii. pp. 464-81.

⁴ Oehler, *Old Test. Theol.*, vol. ii. p. 43.

for holy convocation, and inaugurated by a whole day's fasting, the great day's function began at early dawn. Then, after the morning sacrifice, the High Priest, who had lived for a week previous in the sanctuary, washed not simply his hands and his feet, as on ordinary occasions, but his whole person. Having robed himself, not in his "garments of glory"—as when he appeared "before the people" as the delegate of Jehovah, but in pure white linen, befitting one who was to appear "before Jehovah" in the simplicity and sincerity of his divinely-ordained office—he presented, out of his own resources, an ox for his sin offering, and a ram for his burnt offering. A ram as their burnt offering, and two goats as their sin offering, were then presented by the people; and upon the goats at the door of the Tabernacle the lot was cast, according to which one of them was destined for sacrifice, and the other for dismissal. The ox which the High Priest had presented having been slain, while a priest stirred the blood which had been carefully received, the High Priest, filling a censer with live coals from the altar, and taking two handfuls of beaten incense, carried them behind the veil into the Most Holy place. There, without looking around, he threw the incense upon the embers, so that its rising cloud might cover and protect him in the presence of the glory; and leaving his censer there, he retired backward to the altar of sacrifice in the court. Bringing with him the blood of his own sin offering into the Most Holy place, now filled with smoke, he made atonement for himself by sprinkling it with his finger to-

wards the mercy-seat, and seven times on the ground in front of it. Qualified thus to officiate for the people, he carried the bowl with the blood of his sin offering back into the Holy place, and leaving it there, he returned to the court, where the goat upon which the lot of Jehovah had fallen, was now slain. Carrying its blood into the Most Holy place, he performed for the people a sprinkling similar to that which he had performed for himself. Retiring again to the Holy place, with the mingled blood of both victims, he anointed the horns of the altar of incense, and seven times sprinkled the ground in front of it. Then followed the atonement or reconciliation of the altar of burnt offering in the courts by his applying the blood to its horns, and sprinkling its sides seven times with his finger, to "cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel."¹

These solemnities having been completed, the other goat was presented alive before the Lord at the altar of sacrifice as the other half of the people's sin offering. Laying both his hands upon its head, the High Priest confessed over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel; and by a man ready at hand he sent it away, bearing all their iniquities into a "separated land," a land whence no road led back to the dwellings of the people. As in the rite for purifying the leper, the double victim was required by the two elements, which had to be represented in the action. Jewish tradition recognised the relation by

¹ Lev. xvi. 19.

prescribing that the goats should be alike in colour, size, and value. By the application of the blood of its companion, sacrificed as Jehovah's, to this second goat, the people were placed in a condition in which they could send away from themselves to where they could not be found, the sins which had been forgiven and atoned. In later times the High Priest is said to have not only confessed their sins, but also to have invoked the punishment due to them upon the head of the goat, which was then led away amid the execrations of the people, to be cast down to death from a precipice in the mountains. This, however, seems to have been no part of the essential rite, for its after-fate is not mentioned in Leviticus, nor is it even suggested there that it was meant to perish in the wilderness. It was sent away, "la Azazel," a curious word, of which divergent explanations have been given. It has been interpreted as describing *the place* to which the goat was sent, as designating the *goat* itself as freed or escaped, as the *name of a demon* supposed to haunt the wilderness, and as an *abstract noun*, signifying "for complete removal."¹ Azazel was probably the name of a demon before the word Satan came into use. Before the Exile, the desert was believed to be the dwelling-place of demons,² and of many demons Azazel,³

¹ Oehler, *Old Test. Theol.*, vol. ii. p. 59; Kurtz, *Sacrificial Worship*, p. 397; Hengst., *Books of Moses*, p. 171; Edersheim, *The Temple and its Services*, pp. 278-286.

² Isaiah xiii. 21, and xxxiv. 14.

³ Some Rabbinites say the name was given to the angel of death. (Buxtorf, *Syn. Jud.*; Rosenmuller, *On Levit.* xvi. 8.) Origen clearly states that Azazel denoted the devil, *Contra Cels.*, lib. vi.; Gesenius, *Thesaur.*, p. 1012, and Ewald, *Alterthum*, p. 403,

like Satan, may have been considered the chief, and the most hostile to all that was good. To such an one probably the goat was sent, bearing the forgiven or covered sins that had been laid upon it. "By this action, the kingdom of evil and its prince were renounced, for the sins to which he had tempted the individual or the nation, so that they might become his own, were repudiated." Moreover, the truth was symbolised that not even "Azazel, Satan, the accuser of the brethren,"¹ can be of any avail against those whom God has reconciled, for once that they are covered by the blood of an acceptable atonement, the sins of His people are thrown into everlasting oblivion.²

identify Azazel with the serpent of Genesis, the Satan of Job and Zechariah, and with Typhon in Egypt.

¹ Job i. 6 ; Zech. iii. 1.

² Hengst., *Egypt and the Books of Moses*, pp. 160-72 ; Fairbairn, *Typol.*, vol. ii. p. 315.

A very early interpretation of the sending away of the second goat, La Azazel, was that it was meant as a bribe to Azazel to prevent him from spoiling the efficacy of the sacrifice. The idea is old and was very generally distributed all over the heathen world. The Septuagint translators are supposed to have rendered La Azazel in verse 8 as τῷ Ἀποπομπαίῳ under this belief. Josephus in *Antiq.* iii., 10, 3, has certainly adopted this view ; so have several Rabbin ; while among moderns Spencer, *De Leg. Rit. Heb.*, and Gesenius

in his *Lexicon* and *Thesaurus* confidently affirm it. Bähr in his *Symbolik*, Hengstengberg in *Egypt and the Books of Moses*, Kurtz and Oehler and others have shown how contradictory this is to the teaching of Jehovistic religion. Yet while we may confidently conclude that this cannot be the interpretation of the ceremony, there seems no consensus of opinion among commentators as to what it did signify. What we have given in the text reads as too much a New Testament interpretation, although the part assigned to Satan in the prologue in Job lends colour to it. Our own opinion, if we may venture humbly to express it, is that the essential point emphasised in the action was the *sending away* of the atoned and confessed iniquities, as ended for ever in their

When the goat was sent away the High Priest went again into the Holy place, divested himself of his white linen robes and left them there; then having washed himself in the court, he donned his ordinary raiment for "glory and for beauty," and proceeded to offer first his own burnt offering, and afterward that of the people, along with the choice portions of the sin offerings already slain. The remains of these sin offerings were carried outside the camp and burned with fire. Only now could the festal sacrifices, consisting of sin offerings, burnt offerings, and meat offerings be offered,¹ and afterwards to crown the day the evening sacrifice was proceeded with. Meanwhile the man who burned the carcasses outside the camp, and he who led away the goat into the desert, had to wash their clothes and bathe themselves before they returned to the congregation. They had, like the High Priest, to do with sacrificial victims which, as having been brought nigh to Jehovah, had become "very holy"; but in performing their office they had also been "outside the camp," which with the sanctuary in the midst of it was the place of purity. The pre-eminent sanctity of the day of atonements required that even the barest possibility

relation to a penitent people. The idea as to *whom* they were sent may after all not be contained in the description, but that of *the place whither* they were sent, viz. a "separated land." "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and

the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found" (Jeremiah l. 20). "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm ciii. 12). "Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah vii. 19).

¹ Numbers xxix. 7.

of contracting uncleanness by being without the camp should be obviated. And hence those who had contracted ceremonial uncleanness had to be ceremonially purified before they could rejoin their brethren. The solemn ablution of the High Priest before he clothed himself with his garments of glory, cannot be explained as due to any sense of defilement which he had acquired *from* the performance of his official duties in the sanctuary, but yet *in* the performance of his duty defilement may have arisen from his own sinful nature. Moreover, as a man compassed with infirmity, he was beginning a new function for the people in the offering of the festal sacrifices. And so he must enter upon it with the customary symbolic confession of impurity, just as in that function, notwithstanding the high and comprehensive atonement which he had made for himself and all the people, he must begin it by presenting another sin offering. Jehovah must be sanctified in all who drew nigh to Him.¹

¹ Professor Robertson Smith, (*Religion of Semites*, pp. 432-33), finds in all these washings a survival of the heathen belief that persons brought into close contact with sacred things were "sanctified" to the peril of all with whom they came into contact, and that ablution both of the body and raiment was required to break the charm and render intercourse with them safe. Such an idea may have been widely prevalent in heathenism, but as we have all along affirmed it was the aim

of the religion of Jehovah to separate Israel from heathenism in all its essential ideas, and we may be sure that the compilers of Leviticus were inspired with very different and indeed opposite beliefs. Jehovah was in the midst of His people as their glory to bless them. The aim of religion was not to defend them from Him but to bring them nigh to Him. The only dangerous thing was not His holiness but their sin or impurity, as separating them from Him their invisible King and Defender.

In such a ceremony repeated year by year continually, the religion of Israel culminated. It was founded upon the belief that Jehovah was in the midst of them, not to destroy or be a terror to them, but to bless and save them by reconciling them to Himself in righteousness. To this end they must observe all the commandments and statutes and ordinances which He had appointed to them. The commandments and the statutes commended themselves to their conscience as just and righteous, and these ordinances—especially these rites of atoning sacrifice—as founded upon a deeply-felt necessity for them, were to them “a reasonable service.” All their worship was inspired by a sense of the necessity for atonement, and without such an embodied confession of sin, approach to the sanctuary under any circumstances whatever would have been sacrilege. The presence of Jehovah evoked at once in the suppliant the consciousness of his unfitness to appear before Him, and that further continuance in His presence was only possible under the protection of the covering which in the blood of an acceptable sacrifice He had provided. “Without that covering every sacrifice even of praise and self-consecration was sinful, every priest was unholy and every place profane.”¹ So we cannot classify the Levitical sacrifices as we do those of other religions into honorary and piacular. Even the distinction generally made between the peace and thank-offerings and the sin and trespass offerings is only superficially correct, for all offerings as rooted in

¹ Cave, *Script. Doct. of Sacrifice*, p. 143.

the sense of sin and expressing the desire for reconciliation and communion with Jehovah, were piacular in the highest and truest sense of the word.

The Levite could not see with our eyes, nor in our light, but he and we are brought face to face with the same reality, though in his case the reality was exhibited in forms more level to his comprehension. In the Old and New Testaments, two volumes of one work, we have recorded the revelation of one Divine purpose to destroy the alienation from God involved in human sin. "The mind of God and the spiritual necessities of man have been substantially the same since sin entered the world, and hence the truth revealed to meet these necessities must have been essentially one in every age; while yet the precise amount communicated, and the form in which it was presented, must have varied from time to time."¹ It was disclosed as men were able to hear it, and always in the shape in which they could apprehend it. In the earlier stages when the reflective faculties were not sufficiently developed, it had to be revealed through symbols, and these symbols became types to the later or higher stages of religion. The partial exhibition of a truth is a prophecy of a fuller revelation of it, and so the truth symbolised prepared the way for its being exhibited in a higher form. The bond of union between the symbols and types of the old economy and the realities of the new, is the fact that one truth is funda-

¹ Fairbairn, *Typology*, vol. i. p. 64.

mental and essential in both, and that is the truth that without atonement or covering of sin, no reconciliation of sinful man to holy Jehovah is possible.

Of that atonement Jehovah Himself was the Author and Finisher. He did not demand from Israel blood of covering ; He provided it for them and gave it to them. What atoned was not the blood of their own life surrendered in symbol, but the blood of a sinless life substituted for them. How it could make atonement an Israelite could not explain ; he could only say that the symbol was divinely appointed, and, therefore, that its use was essential for the pacifying of any conscience anxious that its sin might be pardoned and that its uncleanness might be removed. In this respect he resembled ourselves in relation to the mysteries represented in the holy sacraments. These institutions are symbolic to us, but they are typical of realities to be disclosed in a higher dispensation. When we partake of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in faith, we apprehend in part realities which by and by we shall wholly comprehend. In like manner the atoning sacrifices of the old economy were sacraments divinely instituted, wherein "by sensible signs" the forgiveness of sin and the removing of uncleanness "were represented, sealed, and applied to believers." The blessing was according to faith, and in proportion to faith would be the insight into their significance. Without faith how puerile and trivial our sacraments appear to be ; only the sprinkling of a little water, and the giving and receiving bread and wine. To faith, the one becomes

the laying of Christ's pierced but omnipotent hand upon the head of those who pass for ever under His protection; and the other becomes a more than royal feast with angels and archangels ministering to the glory of the Lord. And yet, the stronger our faith is, the deeper becomes our conviction that our symbolic sacraments are but shadows of a more glorious substance—rudiments which will become as antiquated in a higher and more spiritual state, as all Mosaic and Levitical ordinances have become in the present dispensation.

The end and head of the material creation is man, to whom in the long successive stages of creative energy all things pointed, although he appeared as no product of material creation, save in respect of the body which had been prepared for him out of it. The end of the higher creation represented by humanity is Christ, who owed nothing to humanity save the nature in which He was incarnate. To provide for His manifestation and mission "it was necessary to create a basis of language to express and bring into familiar use the sublime facts and renewing truths of the miracle and mystery of atonement disclosed in His holy life and suffering death. There were no types in nature out of which the words could grow that would signify a matter so supernatural. The only way, therefore, to get a language from them at all was to prepare it artificially, and therefore the ancient ritual of sacrifices appears to have been appointed partly for this purpose."¹

God had no pleasure in the blood of sacrifice, nor

¹ Bushnell, *The Vicarious Sacrifice*, p. 392.

was there any efficacy in it to cleanse away sin. "He never accepted any propitiation for sin, save the single one in perspective,"¹ the life which was worth infinitely more than the life of all sinners together, and whose sufferings surpassed in importance the sufferings of all men. To set forth this propitiation, however, so as to gain intelligent and sympathetic acceptance of it, the universal instinct to approach God by sacrifice, was in His providential dealings with a chosen people brought under Divine control and direction. God thus approached man to point out and sanction the way by which a broken covenant could be restored, and that way led through the sacred altars of the Court, the Holy place, the Holy of Holies, to the Cross of Calvary. As we observe all that was done at those ancient altars, we are being taught that sin can be taken away ; and as we consider the vacant Cross of Calvary upon which the Apostle and High Priest of our profession was once sacrificed, and as we are divinely certified that in virtue of that sacrifice He is now enthroned above the Mercy Seat in the holiest of all, we discover that He hath, indeed, appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and that if we truly look for Him, He shall appear the second time without or apart from sin, unto salvation.²

¹ Ruskin, *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, p. 11.

² Heb. ix. 28.

LECTURE VI

THE PROPHECY OF SACRIFICE FULFILLED IN CHRIST

THE sacrificial worship of Israel served an important purpose in inspiring powerful convictions of sin and of the necessity for its atonement, and when used in faith in the Divine mercy as a means of grace, it must have helped to pacify the conscience. But only in a certain stage of experience. As the people became more reflective, and as their ideas of the Divine holiness became purer and their sense of human sin grew stronger, the conviction deepened in thoughtful worshippers, when fervently laying their hands upon the heads of their victims and making earnest confession and supplication, that it was not possible that the blood of these sacrifices could atone sin. Nothing could atone sin which did not impart righteousness ; and for this there was required their identification with a sacrifice really representative of themselves. No substitute lower in nature than themselves, incapable of sin and of pitying their sufferings because of it, could be a sufficient atonement. The substitute, moreover, must be sinless, and in the sacrifice nothing must be compulsory, but everything

spontaneous. The very insufficiency therefore of the Levitical ritual fostered the demand for a sublimer sacrifice than that of bullocks or of goats, and pointed forward to a more satisfying faith which was yet to be divulged. These ideas are developed with considerable clearness in the prophetical books, in association with the hope of the coming of the Messiah, and it is essential to the proper elucidation of our subject that we should consider it in relation to that peculiar belief.¹

The first gleam of the Messianic hope of salvation radiates from the primeval promise of everlasting enmity between the tempter and the seed of the woman, who, though suffering grievously because of the serpent's present success, would eventually vanquish him. Another ray of it shines from the account of the Deluge, where the blessing upon Shem is put against the curse which had fallen upon the race. It was, however, in Abraham and his seed, that the hope of redemption from the primal curse first centred, for through their election all nations would be blessed. Manifestly the idea that

¹ The title "Messiah" is only once used in the Old Testament and twice in the New (Daniel ix. 25; John i. 41, and iv. 25). Its Greek equivalent, however, "Christ," with the definite article prefixed to it in the Gospels, and without it in the Petrine and Pauline epistles, is always applied to our Saviour. It answers to the word "anointed," which in the Old Testament designated those who, like the king and the

high priest, were anointed with the holy oil upon consecration to their office. From this it was applied in the Book of Daniel to the expected Prince of the chosen people who was to accomplish God's purpose for them, and inaugurate the consummation of the kingdom of God. In Him the limited offices fulfilled by anointed ones in Israel were to be combined.

inspired Mosaism was that Israel would be the Messiah ; and when in Samuel's time, it had become clear to all that the nation could not fulfil its Messianic functions to the world, the hopes suggested by David's early reign made the faithful look to the monarchy—to which the very title Messiah was applied—as that by which the Divine promise would be realised. Alas ! the kingdom failed as completely as the theocracy had failed, and in spite of prolonged prophetic warnings and severe Divine corrections, the Messianic people, because of their apostasy, were crushed and carried into captivity. The chastisement of that humiliation, however, was blessed to the best of the nation, in whom all material or worldly hopes died, and belief arose in a coming king who would restore and purify the “remnant”—the elect people of God—for the good of all mankind. David's sorely humbled son would yet be exalted to reign for ever. Through the very suffering into which the nation had been brought would restoration be achieved, and after them and their glorified king would all nations draw.¹

Before the captivity truer Messianic intimations seem to have been caught by the higher spirits of Israel. In a time of great depression because of the repeated predictions of judgment which he had to announce, Isaiah was instructed that though that dispensation must end, the covenant would still endure. The nation would be shattered, and the vine which Jehovah had planted and tended for seven hundred years would be uprooted, yet the “holy seed” would

¹ Compare Psalms xvi. xxii. xl., and ii. xxi. cx.

survive.¹ The temple with its shekina enthroned above the cherubim made by human hands would be destroyed, and all ceremonial ordinances of purification would be abolished ; but from an eternal altar of sacrifice in the heavenly temple—where Jehovah Himself was enthroned above the adoring seraphim—there would be provided a Divine purification of fire, which would effectually purge away iniquity, and qualify those who experienced it for becoming Jehovah's messengers. So while all that was perishable in the dispensation would be removed, all that was imperishable would be everlastingly established and universally extended, for not one little land but the whole earth would be filled with the glory of the Lord. Thus previous to the Exile, and especially during it, they were being instructed that in all the affliction which had come upon them for their sin Jehovah was involved. Jehovah, who was so jealous that He would "visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations" was no impassible deity pleased only with service and offering. He was jealous because He loved them, and could only be satisfied with their love. Very affectingly did the prophets declare that "He was bearing them as a man doth bear his son,"² that He was "pressed down under the weight of their iniquities,"³ and "broken with their wicked heart."⁴ We cannot read these prophetic expostulations and entreaties without being deeply impressed by the fact, that the God of the Old

¹ Isaiah vi.

² Deuteronomy i. 31.

³ Amos ii. 13.

⁴ Ezekiel vi. 9.

Testament is the same God who is revealed in the New. The element of "jealousy" in the character of Jehovah which is so often adduced as an argument against Old Testament religion is as conspicuous in the Heavenly Father manifested in Christ. The Jehovah who demands in the old economy "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind"¹ is the same who speaks in Christ, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me":² "If any man hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."³ The demand which this jealousy prompts, alike honours man's nature and glorifies God, for it springs from a love that is infinite, and which can only be satisfied with love in return—a love which rejoices in the love of His people and which suffers in their ingratitude. In reading these prophetic threatenings and yearnings over rebellious and apostate Israel, we are listening to the same voice of suffering patience which wept over Jerusalem, and which lamented "Ye will not come unto Me that ye may have life." The just God of the prophets was also their Saviour, afflicted in all their affliction, yea, really enduring in their thoughtless disregard of Himself a sorer passion because of sin than they could endure in its punishment.

This was the revelation that was coming into shape in the sublime prophecy recorded in the fifty-third

¹ Deuteronomy vi. 4, 5.

² Matthew x. 37.

³ Luke xiv. 26.

chapter of Isaiah. The vision is not of the nation, unless it be of the ideal nation personified in an ideal individual. Jehovah's sinless "servant" and true prophet to the world is disclosed as serving only in suffering ; in bearing, though perfectly innocent, reproach and persecution, and in consummating a sacrifice both of atonement and satisfaction in which he "made intercession for the transgressors." Eleven times in a few verses He is said to have suffered for the iniquities of the very people who turned from Him. It was for their peace this chastisement was laid upon Him, and through His stripes they were healed. In the fortieth Psalm He is set forth as willingly devoting Himself to this vocation, as delighting to do Jehovah's will ; and in Psalm twenty-second, it is said that His labour and sacrifice would not be in vain in the Lord. For, while sacrificing His life for the redemption of others, He will live again a new and glorified life, in which His soul shall be rewarded for its travail. All who were astonished at His humiliation will be amazed at His exaltation. For whenever men realise that it was under the burden of their guilt and misery that His heart was crushed, they will begin to feel the shame of their sin and to be smitten into contrition and penitence. So His vicarious sacrifice will effect what punishment had failed to secure ; for hardened hearts which judgment could not break will be melted by it into submission and trust.¹

¹ Driver, *Isaiah, his Life and Times, and the Writings which* bear his name, pp. 40, 42, 94 ; *Expositor*, November, 1884, p. 350 ;

Such a prophecy, along with another in Daniel ix. 23—so specific as to the time when the Messiah would be cut off, “but not for Himself”—had great influence in the education of John the Baptist. He was the herald of this dispensation which fulfils, and therefore interprets, what in the former would otherwise be most confusing. Like the pattern of a painted window, when observed from without, the symbols and prophecies of the Old Testament are perplexing because their designs can only be indistinctly traced. When considered from within the shrine of the New Testament, these “figures for the time then present”¹ are discovered to be “examples and shadows of heavenly things.”² They bear the same relation to the realities described in the Gospel which figures of speech bear to the facts which they suggest. Upon opening our New Testament, we find in the very beginning of it, in unmistakable clearness, the interpreting testimony that One had appeared in whom all the mysterious symbols and predictions of old time were to find their explanation. The Baptist was their first interpreter, and the inspiration which enabled him to fulfil the office was manifestly caught from and nourished by the prophecies of Isaiah. “It was the gathering up of all the Old Testa-

Id. December, p. 430 ; Dillman, *Isaiah*, p. 472 ; Dr. G. A. Smith, *Isaiah*, *Expos. Bib.*, ch. liii.

¹ Hebrews ix. 9. The New Testament is the key to the Old, not the reverse. When we understand New Testament facts, and

New Testament teaching regarding them, we are able to explain Old Testament ordinances (Delitzsch, *Com. on Hebrews*, vol. ii. p. 450).

² Hebrews viii. 5.

ment rays of light into the burning glass of that prophet's soul" which fired him with the conviction that "the kingdom of heaven"—the promised rule of Jehovah upon earth—was close at hand. Under the same influence he was forced to proclaim the necessity for inward and outward repentance as the only possible preparation for the manifestation of its Messiah King. It was from the pages of the same prophet that the likeness of the Messiah was most distinctly reflected; and yet how perplexing to him must have been Isaiah's endeavour to suggest the revelation of Him. Isaiah could only do so in contrasts and by antinomies. The Messiah would be most abject, and yet most honoured; forsaken, and yet beloved of Jehovah; vanquished, and yet triumphant. He would be "led as a lamb to the slaughter," and yet be seen travelling "in the greatness of His strength." Supreme in authority He would claim supremacy in service, and while overthrowing His enemies, He would draw upon Himself their infirmities and sorrows, "and bear their iniquities." All this he had pondered long and earnestly in the silence of the wilderness, unable to solve the contradictions or to discern whither they tended, till Jesus came to be baptized. Never before had he seen in any human face such power of love and innocence, such majesty and meekness, such capacity of sorrow; and beholding Him he began to realise that he was confronted by the very visage which Isaiah had endeavoured to suggest. It was a revelation to him that his own ministry was being justified by the event, for the kingdom of

heaven was indeed at hand, and was already individualised in its King.¹

During forty days, in which Jesus in the desert was being prepared for His manifestation, the Baptist was also undergoing a process of opening of his understanding. While Jesus was being tempted in solitude to believe that He could not be the Messiah, the Baptist, with susceptible crowds around him, was being tempted to assume that he was the Messiah. The result and reward of his conquest of that temptation was deeper self-abnegation, involving clearer spiritual insight. So when he beheld Jesus coming from His great victory, bearing in His emaciated yet glorified figure the traces of His awful conflict—His countenance especially transfigured by resignation and readiness to undertake a ministry which would lead him to His cross—all at once the mystery was solved. There, innocent as a lamb about to be immolated, was verily the suffering servant of Jehovah, who, for love's sake, was taking upon Him not the deliverance of the nation but the iniquities of all men. "Lo, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

We need not of course infer that when the Baptist uttered this prophecy, he had the matured consciousness of the great truth which two of his hearers, St. Peter and St. John, afterwards came to find embodied in it. His thoughts of the Messiah were far higher

¹ Keim, *Jesus of Nazareth*, vol. ii. p. 217; Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. i. p. 263.

than those of all His contemporaries, but His own prophetic words soared far beyond his thoughts, and their real significance could only be understood after events had fulfilled them. Indeed, their full significance is as inexhausted and as inexhaustible to-day as when they were first spoken. The fact remains, however, that in one pathetic sentence, the Baptist—a Jew addressing Jews—in a striking metaphor, “condensing the whole sacrificial system of the Law into a burning word,” directly applied it to Jesus.¹ He did not refer to any particular sacrifice, and he may not have had any distinctive rite in view,² but his thought was full of atonement. There was God’s sacrifice who was taking away not “sins”—the particular transgressions, of which by this law Jews were tempted to think exclusively—but “sin” in its totality—not the sin of the covenant people—but the sin of the whole “world.” In the very forefront of the Gospel, therefore, in this most pregnant sentence we have summed up the whole testimony of the New Testament concerning Christ and His mission. He had come as the Lamb of God, not for the removal from the world of the penalty due to sin, but for the “covering” or extermination of sin—

¹ Reynolds, *John Baptist*, 1875, p. 361.

² The Passover was at hand, and it seems impossible to exclude the thought of the paschal lamb with which the Lord was afterward identified (Wescott, on *St. John’s Gospel*, p. 20). The paschal sacrifice was the basis of

all the sacrifices of Israel, and was only enlarged and applied in the morning and evening sacrifices in which the twofold ideas of redemption and communion were exhibited. (Edersheim, *Life and Times*, vol. i. p. 342.) Lightfoot, *Horæ Heb. et Talm.*, Works Pitman, vol. xi. pp. 325-27.

the taking for ever away of the evil principle which separates all men from God.

If the Baptist had come in the spirit of Isaiah, it was soon manifest that Jesus had come in the power of the suffering servant of Jehovah, of whom Isaiah had prophesied. He had not come "in His own name," moved by personal impulses to do His own will, but in the name of His Father, in absolute self surrender to do only His will. He was a mediator, not because He had stepped between an alienated race and God ; not because He had been elected by the race as Moses was put forward by Israel to plead their cause ; but as one whom God had consecrated and sent¹ into the world, not to obtain, but to reveal His eternal good-will for their salvation.² It was a complete reversal of the ideas which till then had prevailed of the relation in which God stands to man. Good men till then, even when rendering sacrifice and service as Jehovah's due, had lived very much unto themselves. They had obeyed and honoured Him, in the hope that it would be well with them in this world and also in the next. Now, however, One was among them who said that He was entrusted with all the authority of His father, not to demand their service, but to claim the Divine prerogative of serving them, not expecting any offering from them, but insisting upon His sole right of being their sacrifice. Giving Himself for them as His Father was always supplying their necessities, He was among them as One

¹ John x. 31.

² Bushnell, *The Vicarious Sacrifice*, p. 32.

who had come, "not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."¹

This expression is the keynote of all the Lord's utterances, and of all the testimonies of His Apostles concerning His life and work. He had not been sent into the world just to influence men for their good, by teaching them purer doctrine, by setting them a holier example, and by accepting with greater meekness and submission their common liabilities, and the consequences of general human misdirection and original sin. In assuming humanity He had, indeed, involved Himself

¹ Matt. xx. 25 ; Mark x. 45.

The use of the word "ransom" in the Greek Testament is based upon its use in the Septuagint, where the verb is employed at least forty times as the equivalent of Hebrew verbs signifying to recover what has been alienated, and generally to deliver from the power of enemies (Psalm cvi. 10), from the power of sin (Psalm cxxx. 7), from the power of death (Hosea xiii. 14). The reference in every case is to the Exodus when first the word came into use. The word, therefore, has always a Hebrew significance, separating it entirely from the Gentile usage of it. For the Gentile idea of ransom is that of price or forfeit, or equivalent, paid to the power from whom the person is delivered. And this was the idea which inspired one of the early theories of atonement, that Christ's sacrifice was ransom paid to the devil. Neither the

Old nor the New Testament usage of the word yields the slightest authority for this application. Jehovah did redeem His people at great cost, but He paid Pharaoh no ransom. Of the greater work of redeeming the race Hosea says, "I will redeem them from death, O death ! I will be thy plague ; O grave ! I will be thy destruction." So redemption instead of involving a price paid to the powers of evil, involved an unknowable devastation of those powers at the cost of unknowable sacrifice to the Deliverer. This was the sense in which Christ applied the word to Himself, and though men could not understand all that was implied in it, they would understand generally that the forfeited lives of many would be spared and restored, because His had been surrendered and given away. Cp. Dale, *The Atonement*, p. 76.

in all these penalties of sin ; but His mission was one of peculiar service, a service of unique and unapproachable sacrifice, that through the power of it He might bring men out of their sins, and so out of their penalties, into oneness in Himself with God. Upon several occasions, under the power of this conviction He deliberately applied to Himself the symbolism of the sacrifices, but always widening the application beyond the utmost limit which a Jew could have conceived. For example, in the Synagogue at Capernaum, a most sordid and unteachable crowd, who had intruded upon Him in the hope of forcing Him into their political schemes, and of using His miraculous power for their personal convenience, demanded from Him a repetition of the Mosaic wonder, a supply of manna, bread from Heaven. In reply, He offered Himself as "the Bread of God which cometh down from Heaven," and altogether uninfluenced by their ever-deepening contradiction and hardening unbelief, He proceeded to enlarge His saying in words which we may be sure were not meant to mystify them, but were used because no others could fitly suggest His meaning. "I am the living bread which came down from Heaven : if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever : and the bread that I will give, is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."¹ To their unbelief it proved a hard saying, and it was the occasion of His rejection by many of them ; to His own disciples it was a deep saying to be pondered reverently until He, or the Holy

¹ John vi. 51.

Spirit, in the events of His ministry would reveal its significance. To us it may still be a difficult saying, though probably our difficulty arises from confounding the idea which His hearers entertained of manna as bread of God, with the sacrificial metaphor which He applied to Himself. Under the law, as we have seen, the portion of the sacrifices which was consumed upon the altar was designated "the Bread of God." Instead of signifying the gifts which God bestowed upon man, the expression covered those parts of a sacrifice of which not even a priest was permitted to eat, because Jehovah claimed them as exclusively His own,² after the blood of the victim had been brought into contact with the altar, His symbol. Our Lord knew well the import of this action in the sacrificial ritual, and yet He did not hesitate upon this occasion to apply it to Himself. He clearly identified Himself with Jehovah's peculiar portion of a sacrifice, and He instructed the people that His heavenly Father thus offered Him for the satisfaction of their hunger and thirst unto life eternal. Before He could be given *to* them for this end, He must be given up *for* them; but through this surrender there would be provided heavenly food, enough and to spare for all who cared to receive it, and "he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever."

Then again, not that He might expound but because He must testify—not as explaining a theology but as revealing the truth, not preaching a gospel but acting and speaking that "there might be a gospel to preach"—at

¹ Lev. iii. 11; Ezek. xlv. 7; Sykes, *Essay on Sacrifice*, p. 77.

His last passover,¹ of which with great desire He longed to partake, He identified Himself with all that the paschal sacrifice had predicted in the past, and provided for the commemoration of its fulfilment in Himself, for all the future. In instituting the sacrament of baptism, He omitted what was painful in the corresponding Hebrew rite, and assumed as the action and element essential to His purpose "the washing with water." From the Paschal feast He transferred not the lamb—for no longer were the creatures to suffer in the worship of the Creator—but only the bread and the wine as all that He required. He was inaugurating "the new covenant" of which Jeremiah had prophesied.² He had proclaimed the only law to be observed in it, the new commandment,³ that His disciples should "love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." The seal of His love to them was the offering of Himself to fulfil His Father's will for them, and of that offering the new ordinance would be more than a memorial. It would be a medium of communion with Himself as the spring of their life. The efficacy of His sacrifice for them depended upon their being incorporated in Him; and therefore, although He took into His hands the paschal bread and wine and blessed them, it was not of them but of His body and blood

¹ It appears to have been the first at which He ever presided as Head of a company, and if so, the offering of the Paschal Lamb on this occasion was the first and last, and only sacrifice He ever

presented. See Edersheim, *Life and Times*, vol. ii. pp. 490 *seq.*; Lightfoot, *The Temple Service*, Works, vol. ix. pp. 120-170.

² Jeremiah xxxi. 31-34.

³ John xiii. 34.

which He invited them to partake. "Lo! my body being broken for you; take, eat," "Lo! the cup of the new covenant in my blood, drink ye all of it." He had manifestly the same truth in His mind which He sought to set forth when He said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."

And surely we have sufficient acquaintance with the sacrificial ritual which supplied the words, to apprehend the great spiritual verity which, under the veil of earthly things, He symbolised and sealed to us. It was life liberated by sacrifice that atoned under the Law; and though the symbol was necessarily imperfect, seeing there was no real union between the offerer and his sacrifice, as a predictive type it sufficed. For all that it lacked was supplied in the voluntary sacrifice of Christ. With Him who was not ashamed to call us brethren, who because "the children are partakers of flesh and blood, Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy Him that had the power of death," all men are capable of vital union. In Scripture death is never represented as natural but as the consequence of sin; and as incarnate in human nature, our Lord assumed conditions under which as Son of Man, perfectly obedient to God's will, He could die. In dying He undoubtedly endured the penalty of the Fall, and thus far fulfilled our destiny; but in dying He also made the efficacy of His life accessible to the race whose nature He assumed. In virtue of this dying, His life continues operating in the liberated fulness of its energy for our advantage. It is this life which He

desires and pledges Himself in the holy sacrament to communicate to us. The sacrifice which rendered that life available, when once offered on the morrow, could not and need not ever after be repeated; but those for whom that sacrifice was so freely made, were involved thereby in the obligation and privilege of offering continually "the sacrifice of praise."¹ As they yielded themselves in living sacrifice and thank-offering for their redemption, they would become by faith partakers of His body and blood. Through their faith, would be communicated to them His life or spirit of self-sacrifice, and when that spirit is perfect and complete in His Church, He will celebrate in His Father's kingdom the closest of all communion.²

While thus identifying Himself with the most prominent sacrificial institutions of the Law, our Lord's own ideas of sacrifice rose far higher and extended far beyond the thoughts suggested by these rites. They

¹ Hebrews xiii. 15.

² The doctrine of transubstantiation like many other corruptions in Christianity is based upon heathen ideas. That the bread and wine through the prayer of the priest are changed into the substance of Christ's flesh and blood, is a belief worthy of savages; and yet, as in nearly every perverted dogma, there is a truth in transubstantiation which is of very precious import. The transubstantiation occurs not in the elements of bread and wine, but in the worthy partakers, who

through faith by the operation of the Holy Spirit are regenerated into Christ. So considered, there is nothing fanciful or exaggerated in the language which our Lord employed, if we try to grasp the reality which only it can suggest. For the life, the death, the totality of Christ, as God's unspeakable gift, must be the sustenance and life of the Church on earth and in heaven alike. (Westcott, *St. John's Epistle*, pp. 34-37; Hebrews, pp. 293-4; Stanley, *Christian Institutions*, pp. 97, 107.)

had all more or less a judicial significance, as means legally provided to secure a specified end; but His revelation was not of sacrifice as a legally appointed means, but as the very highest of ends. He disclosed it as a law in the nature of things, and essential to the highest quality of life. Sacrifice is a principle operative in every domain of existence. In nature, the lower form of life is always being sacrificed for the higher, the vegetable for the animal, the animal for the sustenance of man.¹ Some of the recent discoveries of science are pathetic illustrations of the fact that in the world of nature as truly as in the world of man, no creature, no organism liveth unto itself, for the law of sacrifice comprehends in its sweep the very lowest manifestations of being.² In Christ, however, the law of sacrifice was revealed as comprehending the very highest manifestation of being. He magnified and made it honourable as the law of the Divine life, but as operating in complete reversal of the natural order. In nature the lower is created to serve the higher, and the weak gives itself up to the strong; but in the spiritual order, the higher lives for the lower, the strong bears the burdens of the weak, the good endure for the evil, and God takes the sinner's place. Our Lord brought the Father, whom no one had seen at any time, into view, by doing His works, and

¹ "La fleur tombe en livrant ses parfums au Zéphyr" (Lamartine, *L'Automne*), and wild myrtles preserve

"Their hoard of perfume for the dying hour,
When rudeness crushes them." (Talfourd, *Ion*.)

² Taylor, *Altruism in Plants*.

by fulfilling His intentions from the very same motive. What He said and did, what He was and what He suffered, was just a revelation in time of that love which in God is eternally watching over a sinful race to seek and to save them. He was His father's mediator upon whom before He came into the world, the whole burden of human suffering and human sin had rested. So He came not to *make a sacrifice* by which the difficulty between God and man could be arranged, but to *reveal God's sacrifice*, that through the revelation He might redeem, regenerate, and reconcile humanity to God. The joy that was set before Him was the same which satisfied the servant of the Lord in His unparalleled suffering, the joy of seeing His travail of soul issue in the communication to a perishing race of the life which He had in Himself. Willingly and for this end He incorporated Himself in humanity, and as willingly through death He would sink as a seed into its destiny, that as the head of a new creation He might bring forth fruit multitudinous to the glory of His Father.¹

This conviction that the losing of life would in His case be the gain of eternal life to innumerable myriads, accounts for conduct leading directly to His crucifixion, which would be otherwise inexplicable. The fact stands clearly out from the Gospel narratives that the arrest of Jesus was due to His own voluntary surrender. He was captured, not because His enemies had succeeded in their plans against Him, but because He chose to fall into their hands. The evangelists carefully

¹ John xii. 24, 25.

represent the closing transactions of His life in their relation to the Divine order. A certain course was deliberately followed by Him, because He believed it to be ordained in the counsels of God. "Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am He. And Judas also which betrayed Him, stood with them. As soon then as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward, and fell to the ground."¹ The sense of humiliation and awe, which the sudden revelation of a higher and holier nature inspires in coarse and sinful natures, so overwhelmed them, that they could only fulfil their mission with His full consent. So when St. Peter ventured upon his act of rash resistance, He convinced him that He required neither his protection nor his succour. He was no helpless prisoner held firmly in the grip of His enemies, for He could secure His liberty by a single prayer, yea, by a silent wish. So turning to His trembling and really vanquished assailants, He allowed them to lead Him away to judgment, and torture, and death, "for the cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"²

And yet that was "the cup" which just before He had prayed might if possible be taken away. He had learned that it was not possible; that the cup instead of being taken away by His Father's power, was really given Him by His father's love. It was essential to the fulfilment of His mission, and therefore He had thankfully accepted it as "a cup of salvation, calling

¹ John xviii. 4-6.

² John xviii. 11.

upon the name of the Lord." We have thus self-surrender so complete as to be absolute; not human surrender to a fate that is found to be inevitable, as when a martyr caught in the toils of his enemies succumbs to their power, but Divine surrender to a suffering which was evitable. The martyr in falling a sacrifice to the truth loses his life, but Christ's life was not lost, it was given. Death to the martyr is no part of the original idea of his mission, but something which supervenes and interrupts it; in our Lord's case death from the very first entered into the plan of His ministry, and without a painful and shameful death His ministry could not have been fulfilled. He came into the world to be crucified. "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life. . . . No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself: I have power to lay it down.¹ . . . This commandment have I received of My Father." He died not from external compulsion, for He was perfectly free to evade the necessity, but from inward spontaneity, as held only by the cords of love to higher duty. Death did not vanquish Him as he vanquishes all other human beings. Most unrelenting of despots, he comes upon all other persons by surprise, and forcibly carries them whither no one of them would naturally go. But even upon the cross Christ did not yield Himself up to death. He confronted death, as He confronted His captors in Gethsemane, and assured that He had finished His work, He looked beyond death, and, in a most kingly

¹ John x. 17-18.

way, surrendered His spirit, not to death but into the hands of His father.¹

The ministry of Christ, heralded by the distinct prediction that it was redemptive in its intention and sacrificial in its method, was thus begun, continued, and ended by Him in the full conviction that He was giving His life a ransom for many. Though not offered upon any altar, nor slain as a sacrifice according to the ceremonial of the law, but simply murdered in flagrant violation of the law, His soul was made an offering for sin for the salvation of the world.² As the lamb of Jehovah, upon Him was laid the iniquity of us all, that He might bear away the sin of the world. When we turn to the Apostolic testimonies recorded in the New Testament we find that every one of them either directly expresses or is based upon and implies the same conviction. The faith of the apostles in the

¹ Christ's death is uniformly represented in the New Testament as a *voluntary act*; in exact fulfilment of what He Himself said of it in John x. 17, 18, Matthew xxvi. 50, Mark xv. 37, John xix. 30, state that "He gave" or "yielded up His Spirit," Luke xxiii. 46 gives the words in which He did so, quoted from Psalm xxxi. 5. In close relation to this are St. Paul's statements in Ephes. v. 2 and 25. Gal. ii. 20, and that of St. Peter in his first epistle ii. 23. All the evangelists note the "loud voice," or cry uttered before the sufferer ex-

pired, an indication that he retained the full vigour of the vital organs to the moment of death. This was one of the marvels of the crucifixion which deeply impressed the Roman centurion, who must have seen many crucifixions but had never seen or heard of one in which the crucified died within three hours, and uttering a shriek which proved he was strong to the very last. The Patristic writers all accept the death of Christ as spontaneous, compare Turtull., *Apol.*, chap. xxi.; Augustine on *St. John's Gospel*, xix. 30.

² Bushnell, *God in Christ*, p. 213.

Divine sacrifice was not derived by them from interpretation of Old Testament Scriptures; it rested upon the revelation given through Christ Himself, a revelation for which they were as unprepared as they were for the revelation of His resurrection. Once that it began to dawn upon them, the facts of Christ's life and His own teaching illuminated Scripture, and with understandings opened they learned that "thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name, "among all nations."¹ The epistles of St. James and St. Jude are not dogmatic, but didactic and ethical in their character and purpose, and in writing them neither apostle felt under any necessity to defend or to expound the doctrines of the new religion. And yet, the silence of St. James—most Jewish of Christians—to the ordinances of the Law and to the services of the Temple, surely signifies that he felt he was living in a dispensation when all such ordinances and services had been rendered unnecessary. Then the sublime doxology with which St. Jude concludes his epistle, plainly indicates that the foundation of all his hope was the Divine mediation of "our Lord Jesus Christ." "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless (without blemish) before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, now and ever. Amen."

¹ Luke xxiv. 46, 47.

The epistles of St. Peter are full of references to the sacrificial worship of his forefathers, and these are all used in illustration of his teaching concerning Christ. By His precious blood, "as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," we have been redeemed,¹ "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by Whose stripes ye were healed;"² Who "once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God."³ To abstract from the epistles of St. Paul the same or similar conceptions would be to destroy them, while to cite an illustration we should have to quote almost the whole of his writings. Redemption from sin and from the power of the devil, propitiation set forth by God, reconciliation with God, are all connected in the most explicit manner with the facts of Christ's death and resurrection. Christ is the High Priest through whom he gives thanks to God and by whom we have access to the Divine Presence.⁴ He is the sacrifice whose atoning blood justifies and brings us near.⁵ He is the passover sacrificed for us, that life, freed and purified from all leaven of wickedness, might be, alike in its pains and pleasures, a perpetual festival;⁶ and He is the Mediator between God and men who gave Himself a ransom for all,⁷ that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.⁸ As we have

¹ 1 Peter i. 19.

² 1 Peter ii. 24.

³ 1 Peter iii. 18.

⁴ Ephes. ii. 18, and iii. 12.

⁵ Colos. ii. 13.

⁶ 1 Corinth. v. 7-8.

⁷ 1 Timothy ii. 5, 6.

⁸ Titus ii. 14.

already seen, the unknown writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews has developed the same doctrines in language of unmistakable clearness. His great object was to show that the sublime ideals which were only projected in the dispensation introduced through Moses were all being fulfilled in the dispensation revealed by Christ. The theocracy, which Moses the faithful servant of Jehovah had failed to found, had been successfully established by Christ the Son, in the kingdom of God. The house of Israel, which Jehovah's indwelling had failed to sanctify, was now realised in the true house of God, the Church; and the offices which in old time were divided between Moses the apostle and Aaron the high priest, were united in an infinitely loftier form in Christ, the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. We need not follow out his comparisons whereby he instructed his countrymen, that the sacrificial worship and priestly mediation, upon which their fathers rested with all their hearts, were only temporary shadows of better and enduring realities secured to them by the death, resurrection, ascension, and mediation of Christ in the presence of the Holiest. We only observe that the truth of Christ's vicarious sacrifice threads this epistle, as it does all others we have mentioned, through and through, "as a leaf is threaded by its fibres." The teaching in each and all of them is simply an expansion of the doctrine proclaimed in the first Christian sermon that was ever preached, that through the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, "delivered by the determinate counsel

and foreknowledge of God," there had been secured for all who would repent, "remission of sins" and "the gift of the Holy Ghost."¹

St. John, the last writer in the New Testament, has summarised and focussed the revelation given through all the Scriptures, in the testimony that God in love sent His Son to be the atonement for our sins, the propitiation not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.² The word *ἱλασμός* which he employs is peculiar to him. Found in the Septuagint as the synonym of *kippurim*, it has numerous Latin equivalents. Augustine has sometimes rendered it "propitiator," but the rendering of it as "propitiation" has prevailed. St. John has carefully emphasised the thought that Christ is both offering and priest. A propitiator might employ means of propitiation outside of himself, but Christ is our "propitiation," just as He is our "righteousness" and our "life." It must be noted also that the idea expressed in St. John's usage of the word is quite contrasted with classical usage. The *ἱλασμοὶ* in Greek tragedy, as we have seen, were offered to the deities of the under world with the view of appeasing their anger; the *καθαρμοὶ* were effective for restoring the penitent to society through the favour of Apollo and the deities of the celestial world. St. John's conception is not that of appeasing one who is angry with a personal feeling against an offender; it is that of covering or exterminating what has occasioned a necessary alienation, and interposed an inevitable obstacle to fellowship. Such

¹ Acts ii. 22, 38.

² 1 John ii. 2 and iv. 9-10.

phrases as propitiating God, "reconciling" God, are foreign to the language alike of St. John and of all the writers of the New Testament. Propitiation always means the atoning, covering, removal of some check on man's side, which, coming between the soul and God, intercepts the light of His favour.¹ It signifies a Divine act which affects wholly the matter of the sin and the sinner, as something which neutralises sin, and quickens and changes, yea creates anew the character of the sinner. So in St. John's thought *ἱλασμός* includes *καθαρός*.² The blood of propitiation reconciles the sinner to God by cleansing away his sin, not by external application as in the case of the leper, but by spiritual appropriation of Christ's life, made available by His death, resurrection, and ascension. So the "blood of Christ," by which the atonement is made, is the very power by which we are regenerated and sanctified. The voices vary, but the Apostolic testimony is always the same. St. Peter, St. Paul, St. John, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in whatever light they may set forth the cross, find but the one significance in "the blood of Christ" shed upon it. The phrase was figurative and symbolic in the usage of each of them—as indeed all human speech throughout must be—and doubtless they felt, as we are often forced to feel, that no human words, however perfect and refined, can do justice to spiritual facts, which are both too lofty and too profound to be expressed by them. Yet they never allow us to form, from their use of the

¹ Romans v. 10, 11 ; 2 Corinth. v. 18.

² 1 John i. 7.

expression, any material conception. The power of Christ's blood to atone and cleanse is the virtue of the life or spirit expressed in it—the "Eternal Spirit,"¹ the spirit of self-sacrifice in which God is eternally rich—and when that spirit dwells in and controls us perfectly we shall have everlasting fellowship with the Father and with the Son, in the unity of the Holy Ghost.²

It is interesting if not significant to find the "Lamb of God," proclaimed by the Baptist, occupying so prominent a place in the testimony of St. John the Divine. His conception of the truth implied in the phrase had greatly enlarged since the day when he first heard it applied to Jesus of Nazareth. More powerfully impressed even then, than were his fellow disciples, both by the words of the Baptist and by the personality of Jesus, he seems during three years of close and devoted discipleship to have more truly discerned than they did his Lord's real mission. It was he who treasured up the mysterious discourses about the "Bread of God," "the flesh and the blood which Christ would give for the life of the world." So when he gazed upon his Lord as He was dying upon the cross, he may have begun to apprehend that there was more than human passion displayed in that tragedy, and that the wrath of man was being overruled to further some "determinate counsel of God." After Pentecost he disappears from the scenes depicted in the Acts, and for years during which his companions,

¹ Hebrews ix. 14.

² Westcott, *Com. on Epistle of St. John*, pp. 84-85.

in labours most abundant, were sowing the seed of the Gospel in the great field of the Gentile world, he, in what may have been regarded as a life of inaction, was pondering the mystery of the Life which had been manifested, and was "tarrying," as the Lord predicted, for another coming of Himself. St. Paul and the rest of the apostles were powerfully instructing the Church as to the relation of the sacrifice of Christ the Son of God to the salvation of the world from sin; but at last came the time when St. John was required; and when he broke his long silence it was to complete the revelation. His companion apostles had laid the foundations of the faith in the truth, intimated before by prophecy and type, that the only sacrifice that could atone sin must be set forth and consummated by God Himself. The inference, however, was natural that the Divine sacrifice was only inaugurated by the manifestation of Christ in the flesh, and was completed in His crucifixion on Calvary. St. Peter had furnished a very precious clue to the apprehension of the mystery in representing Christ as the unblemished and spotless Lamb, "who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you."¹ In the Apocalypse, "the Lamb as it had been slain," disclosed in "the midst of the throne," as adored by the elders and four mystic creatures for having "redeemed them with His blood,"² is revealed as "slain from the foundation of the world."³ The Divine sacrifice was thus exhibited not as a historical fact, an action begun and ended in

¹ 1 Peter i. 19-20.² Rev. v. 6-10.³ Rev. xiii. 8.

time, which had been devised as an after-expedient to amend what of God's original work an enemy had marred. It was set forth as something original, something essential in the being of God. Christ as one with God, who always has upon Him the burden of His universe, was bearing sin in vicarious sacrifice, before He was manifested as bearing it away. He did not become the Lamb of God when He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; for before He was manifested He reigned, and must reign eternally, as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. It is another endeavour through metaphor to suggest a spiritual truth which human speech is too rude and imperfect an instrument to utter; but guided by its light, as we contemplate the appalling fact of the Divine human heart broken upon Calvary because of sin, we begin to discover how the Being of God is eternally related to anything and everything in His universe that needs to be atoned. We understand, too, how the Apostle who wrote the Apocalypse is properly designated as St. John ὁ θεολόγος. For alike in that work, and in his gospel and epistles, he alone—or rather, he first of all theologians—has taught us, that if we would truly apprehend the mystery of the atonement we must proceed towards it not from our conscious alienation and degradation, but from the essential holiness and love of God.¹

It is thus plain that before the dogma of Christ's sacrificial mission can be rejected, the whole tenor of

¹ Compare Maurice, *Sacrifice*, p. 190.

the New Testament language must be remodelled.¹ We must, however, remember that all through the New Testament it is presented as the revelation of a mystery hidden from the ages, and therefore as something which must continue to exercise our understandings and try our faith. Even when we are able to form our clearest and most exact conceptions concerning it, we may be sure that we have not solved all the difficulties which have been or which yet may be raised about it. Not seldom have theologians supposed they were expounding or explaining the mystery, when they were actually undermining its truth. Attempting in perfect seriousness and with pure intent to solve the difficulties, they were unconsciously working for the subversion of the faith. It would not be difficult to detect in some theories of the atonement, long considered orthodox by very large sections of the Church, the taint of heathen conceptions. The ancient theory of the Eastern Church, by which for nearly a thousand years many of the profoundest theologians of their day were content to explain the atonement, was based upon the idea of a ransom paid to Satan to redeem the human race from his thrall. And yet if that fundamental idea was not wholly borrowed from the Typhonic mythology of Egypt its development was greatly influenced by it.²

¹ Magee, *Dissertations*, xxvii.; Warburton, *Div. Leg.*, book ix. chap. ii.

² Osiris, the supreme god of all Egypt, was slain by Typhon, the Egyptian Ahriman, or rather the

Satan into which Ahriman latterly degenerated. After the fragments of his body, which had been scattered by his slayer, were collected and buried by his wife, the sorrowful Isis, he returned to

Another great theory, for which that of ransom was discarded by the Western or Latin Church—which held the field for five centuries preceding the Reformation, and which still colours some systems of Reformed theology—was based upon notions derived from old Roman jurisprudence. In this theory—as clearly formulated by the master-mind of Anselm in a treatise¹ with which theologians have yet to reckon—all is made to turn upon the Roman law of debt,² upon penalties exacted for breach of obligation established by contract, and upon the Roman notion of the continuance of individual existence by universal succession. The atonement is represented by it as an act of homage and satisfaction due to the greatness and majesty of God. Both theories, and many others which sprung from them, fell wide of the mark, because their framers failed to apprehend the significance of the symbols employed in Scripture to suggest the truth. And not a few of the modern Protestant theories—such as those which represent the atonement as having a relation neither to Satan, nor to God's personal claims, but to the moral order of the universe—will be found to fail, because their framers ignore or reject the symbolic teaching of Scripture with regard to an objective atonement.³ The history of theology seems to indicate in regard to this and other cardinal doctrines of Scripture, that many and even

life to be the judge of all who have died, and to see Typhon vanquished by Horus, his son.

Christ in Modern Theology, pp. 122 seq., 479 seq.

¹ *Cur Deus Homo?*

² Cp. A. M. Fairbairn, D.D.,

³ Compare Dale, *The Atonement*, pp. 297-9.

conflicting theories may be required to suggest the whole reality of the truth, so as to suit the varying necessities of the life of the Church at different periods of its history. What we all have to do, is to endeavour carefully to keep the fact of the sacrifice of Christ separate and distinct from the theories devised to explain it. It is faith in the fact, and not faith in any of the theories, that saves and sanctifies the human soul. There may be much in the fact which we cannot explain, and which the acutest intellects are not here expected to explain; but its revelation can be adoringly received by the sagest and by the simplest alike. Just as the sun has outlived many well-devised and cleverly elaborated theories of light and heat, so the fundamental truth—“*Christ died for us*”—which underlies our religion, has already survived several theologies and will probably survive our latest, as a verity the infinitude of which the greatest intellect may not measure, but on which we can confidently rest all our hope, and by which we are really nourished into purer knowledge and nobler human growth.¹

I will not attempt to describe or to review the various schools of theology whose founders and disciples have endeavoured to expound this essential article of our creed. The task would be too great for the limits of this lecture, and moreover, it has already often been executed with commendable fairness and with marked

¹ The preposition “for” us is represented by four words in the original, each with its own shade of meaning. *ἀντί*, Matt. xx. 28; *ὑπέρ*, Luke xxii. 19; *περί*, Rom. viii. 3; *διά*, Rom. iv. 25.

ability by many theologians of our own generation. Among the works to which I have been specially indebted I may name Professor Ritschl's *History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*; ¹ Professor Hodges' *Systematic Theology*, vol. ii.; ² Professor Crawford's *Scripture Doctrine of the Atonement*; ³ Dr. Dale's *Congregational Lecture on the Atonement*; and Dr. Cave's *Scripture Doctrine of Sacrifice*.⁴ From the study of these and similar works we discover that some of the theories apparently most antagonistic to each other, do not really conflict when properly examined. It has often happened that one theory has been superseded, not because it has been proved to be radically false, but because found insufficient to account for all the facts to be covered. In the history of doctrines we do not contemplate a battlefield strewn with the wreck of contending systems. We are witnesses rather of a process in which systems have been successively outgrown or left behind by an advancing and maturing intelligence. And yet no system that ever gained for itself a general acceptance can be said to have been wholly left behind. Its essential truth has survived in the system which supplanted it. The intelligence which it served to foster, having acquired ability thoroughly to "understand and appreciate it,

¹ Edin., Edmonston and Douglas, 1872. ² Edin., Nelson and Sons, 1874. ³ Edin., Blackwood and Sons, 1874. ⁴ T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh. The works of Dr. Bushnell, of Dr. Macleod

Campbell, of Mr. Erskine of Linlathen, and of others, have proved to me very suggestive. They are very valuable treatises upon the great theme, and most worthy of earnest consideration.

has *ipso facto* grown out of and beyond it. It has extracted the principle from the former embodiment, and made it capable of entering into combination with other principles to produce new forms of life and thought.”¹ So, remembering with thankfulness that the human mind has not yet reached the limits of its power of comprehension, that the full significance of the sacrifice of Christ is as far as ever from exhausted, and that the revelation of the Spirit sent “to guide us into all truth”² is still proceeding; I will not canvass particular theories, but rather venture to sketch the more salient points of the doctrine as presented in Scripture, in the light of the experience gained by the Church during the many centuries in which it has been divinely instructed in the “great mystery of godliness.”

First—As to the necessity for the sacrifice of Christ, the teaching of Scripture is unmistakable in precision and clearness. Its uniform testimony is to the effect, that the necessity for the Divine sacrifice originated in the estrangement of the creature. According to St. Paul, humanity is alienated from God because of *sin*. This is the invariable burden of all his epistles, and indeed of all Scripture in the Old and New Testaments. According to St. John, sin is “lawlessness,” the self-assertion of the creature wilfully violating the limits within which the original idea of

¹ Professor Edward Caird, *Essays on Literature and Philosophy*.
 “Essay on the Theology and Ethics of Dante,” in vol i. of

² John xvi. 13.

his being can be harmoniously realised. So what St. Paul characterises as *enmity* to God, and what St. John characterises as *hatred* of God—who is essentially *love*—is in every one of us by natural inheritance, and to it all the disorder and sorrow and suffering in the world are due. This dogma concerning our present condition is so very offensive that it is no wonder it has all along been rejected and flouted, especially by the avowed worshippers of humanity. According to them man neither is the enemy of God, nor is alienated from God because of his wickedness. In his nature there is no disorder, save what is inseparable from his imperfect development. If there be suffering and weakness and misery in his life, they are traceable not to his perversity, but to his ignorance; and all that is required to redeem him from them is only education to correct what in him is defective or faulty. Meanwhile it is well that the units should suffer, so that the great world system in some distant future may work out its beneficent result.

Universal experience, however, and the actual condition of the world and of man, contradict the philosophers and support the Apostles. Man's present character and relations are abnormal, for they do not harmonise with the universal order and peace of creation. The thoughts which he everywhere and always conceives of the Author of his being, his prolonged endeavours under all systems of religion to defend or save himself from Deity, and his universally exhibited uneasiness under law, which he alone of all creatures finds a bondage, indicate that whether by inheritance or personal self-

assertion, or both, he is estranged in thought and affection, in the very spring of his being, from the holiness which in his own belief is essential to the Divine blessedness. This consciousness is not a superstitious feeling from which culture will set us free, for the higher we rise, the more the load upon the conscience increases; and the nobler become our conceptions of what God must be, the more humiliating is our confession of what we really are.

If man as a moral being feels condemned by the evil that is in himself and in the world, he yet finds in his self-condemnation and in his desire to remedy or annul the evils that afflict him the ground of his hope. The moral consciousness that condemns himself and the world, was originally implanted in him by the Creator of the world. It is the token and pledge therefore that though he is now evil by natural inheritance, he is not essentially evil, and that though in his present condition, experience of and conflict with evil "may be the only means possible to a higher good—as calling into activity the Divine element which would destroy it, and thereby contributing to its realisation in character"¹—evil is not necessary to the fulfilment of the original idea of his being. On this point also the teaching of Scripture is explicit. Moral evil is not eternal, for if it were, Deity would be divided against Himself,² and there would be "two infinities." The Creator is in no way

¹ Compare Jones, *Browning as a Philosopher and a Religious Teacher*, p. 271 seq., also some most thoughtful and searching

observations in pp. 155, 156, 357, 359.

² Hitchcock, *Eternal Atonement*, p. 6.

responsible for it as His creation, for that would represent Him as willing into existence a contradiction of His own nature. According to Scripture, moral evil originated not in the plan of the Creator, but in the will of the creature, and therefore for our comfort we are encouraged by Scripture to hope that, as having had a beginning, it must also have an end. Scripture begins and concludes with the prophecy that its conquest is temporary, that its reign in creation is local, and that its duration will prove but an incident—though one terribly prolonged—in the history of the universe. In the Apocalypse the Lamb is described as gaining over it a certain and complete victory, for in “the new heavens and the new earth” His throne alone is found to be established, and there is an end of “death,” and an end of “hell.”¹ The Mazdean conception therefore of conflict between good and evil powers, and the Platonic conception of a Divine principle operating invisibly in humanity for its emancipation from evil, are assumed and corrected and fulfilled in the teaching of the Scripture. The mystery still remains that evil should have been divinely permitted to break out in the universe and invade the world of man, but the revelation of God’s relation to evil and of His purpose concerning it is clear enough.²

¹ Revelation xx. 14.

² “God’s all, man’s nought :
But also, God, whose pleasure brought
Man into being, stands away
As it were, a handbreadth off, to give
Room for the newly made to live,

For God cannot tolerate the disorder in the universe caused by rebellion ; He wills to restore harmony and to reconcile all things unto Himself. Sin is a principle which, as the antagonism of good, a pure moral being must hate—hate more intensely and punish more inexorably the purer he is. What is essentially wrong would require to be made eternally right, before God could ignore or be reconciled to sin. So all through Scripture the Divine denunciations of sin are very stern, and the Divine judgments upon it are described as very severe. From the language employed concerning Divine vengeance we are not of course allowed to infer the existence in Deity of any angry mood or excitable disposition corresponding to our own troubled natures. The eternal repose of the all-perfect Being cannot be broken ; but the language, though figurative, is appropriate as suggesting the inevitable and inexorable operation of retributive law as long as sin exists. It is true that the “action of Deity in relation to evil is

And look at Him from a place apart,
And use His gifts of brain and heart,
Given, indeed, but to keep for ever.
Who speaks of man, then, must not sever
Man's very elements from man,
Saying, ' But all is God's '—whose plan
Was to create man and then leave him
Able, His own word saith, to grieve Him,
But able to glorify Him too,
As a mere machine could never do,
That prayed or praised, all unaware
Of its true fitness for aught but praise or prayer.
Made perfect as a thing of course.”

(Browning, *Christmas Eve and Easter Day*, Works, ed. 1865, vol. iii. pp. 173-4).

never vindictive," and yet it is always "vindicatory." There must be unchangeable enmity between holiness and wickedness; and in the same enmity between evil and man made in the image after the likeness of God, lies all man's hope of good.

Here again this language concerning the vengeance of God as divinely intolerant of sin is employed, even though it is anthropomorphic and tends to belittle and degrade the sublime reality with which it deals. It is indeed merely the language of men, but it is the only language by which the consciences of men can be roused to appreciate the significance of sin. There is a general temptation besetting our nature to think lightly of sin, as not an offence against infinite holiness but only as a fault or mistake. There are also particular moods in which because the moral consciousness is weak, the sceptical intellect tempts us to regard it as affecting after all only ourselves, or at the most society. Therefore if we quietly accept the injury which by our folly we have brought upon ourselves, and succeed in making amends to society for having wronged or affronted it, we may think that there is an end of our transgression. The constitution of human nature, however, which, though we may ignore it, can neither be changed nor destroyed, will not allow us to indulge these pleasing delusions for long. Soon, very soon, our moral consciousness rises in might sufficient to rend such shallow sophistries, and to recall us to our real selves. Then we find that though we have endured the consequences of our imprudence, and though we have received the generous pardon of

our fellow-men, we cannot forgive ourselves. The thought of the Power higher than society, who put the moral consciousness within us at the first, and the conviction that we have offended Him by our transgression, begin to assert themselves; and as long as we are dominated by them—that is really as long as we live in this or in any other world—forgiveness of ourselves and by ourselves is simply and absolutely impossible.

Once put thus in possession of ourselves—our sin set before our eyes as evil which we have created but cannot destroy, and which we must account for to One infinitely holy, who cannot ignore it or change His relation to it—we discover that forgiveness is not the easy matter it seemed to be in the moment when the moral consciousness was feeble and the senses were active and strong. The very first difficulty that vexes us is as to the possibility of forgiveness, and were we left to ourselves to find the solution of that difficulty we should be overwhelmed in despair. Nature outside of us reveals no forgiveness, for its laws crush alike the penitent who bemoans, and the impenitent who mocks at sin. Our own nature is as inexorable in its verdict, for the sense of guilt fastens upon the transgressor like the coil of a serpent, which we cannot with all our striving and ingenuity shake off. In such a strait, with no forgiveness discoverable in nature and with no suggestion of it imprinted upon our own being, we learn the worth of revelation. We begin to be thankful that man's relation to God is involved in the earlier and much higher relation in which God stands

to man ; that religion so far from being all expressed in man's service of, and man's prayers to God, consists far more in man's willingness to be helped and saved through listening to God, who is ever communicating His revelation. And we learn to be especially thankful that the God with whom we have to do is not the impassive force, or the abstract principle of some modern metaphysical theorists, but the God of the Bible—One who never can be “scientifically determined or defined,” but who yet, as Carlyle thought, may be “imaginatively symbolised.”¹ Such a Deity we feel we need, and just such a Deity, though by no possible searching could we find Him out, is represented in spite of nature without, and in spite of reason within us, as having first whispered through the prophets, and then as having proclaimed by His Son, and as finally having sealed the proclamation “with the blood of the cross,” that with Him is forgiveness and with Him is plenteous redemption.

From the very beginning of the Bible there is revealed along with the Divine severity against sin, the Divine faithfulness to the sinful creature. As fallen through disobedience from the holiness of his Creator, man must bear the natural penalty for disobedience which is incorporated in the structure of the world and the constitution of human life. In that natural penalty there is expressed the Divine relation towards transgression, but not the whole Divine relation towards the transgressor. Were the Creator only immanent in and co-extensive with the universe, and were His whole mind

¹ Prof. E. Caird, “Genius of Carlyle,” *Essays*, vol. i. p. 248.

and will uttered or set forth in natural laws, the revelation of forgiveness and redemption would be impossible. But while pervading the universe He transcends it. It witnesses to His eternal power and godhead, but it cannot embody them, and were it to vanish He would abide in all His attributes unchangeable. Behind and beyond all the laws that govern it, there is an infinite Being that is unexpressed, and in that sphere His spirit is free to meet the spirit of man, to hear his confession, and to answer his prayers. To Him therefore we are encouraged to appeal for mercy to pardon, and for grace to help. For though by our sin we have fallen from His holiness, no power in this or in any other creation can sever us from His faithfulness. The gulf of separation which we have by our guilt created is impassable from our side, and no atonement which we can procure could fill it up; but what is impossible with man is possible with God. Sin, the moment it became a fact or was conceived by the creature, found its atonement in God, who in the unsearchable depths of His eternal being took its burden upon Himself. So the chasm, if the Bible is to be trusted, has been bridged from the side of Deity, and yet, the only way in which His mediator with the message of forgiveness could reach us, was the way of Divine humiliation in the death of the Cross.¹

If we think of the Creator only as King and Governor, bound to maintain all order in which the wellbeing of His creatures is involved by vindicating any breach of it,

¹ Hitchcock, *Eternal Atonement*, p. 25.

we may be satisfied with the theology which represents the sacrifice of Christ as the satisfaction of Divine justice, which had to be made in order to procure our forgiveness. Christ is thus our Redeemer, as having obtained Divine absolution by enduring as our representative in our stead a sufficient penalty for our sins. That He did suffer for sins "the just for the unjust,"¹ that "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree,"² that "His soul" was to be made "an offering for sin,"³ is declared in Scripture with unmistakable clearness. Moreover, such a view is required to recall us from sentimental conceptions of the Divine benevolence, which really sully the glory of the Divine love, to the reality of the eternal righteousness by which the universe is governed. The sacrifice of Christ was a real satisfaction of the Divine justice, though of course it has never been maintained by the true expounders of this theory, that Christ suffered either in kind or degree what sinners ought to have endured in penalty. "As matter of fact His suffering transcends theirs, for just as the death of a saint would outweigh in significance the annihilation of a universe of gnats, so the suffering of the eternal God for sin immeasurably transcends in worth and power the penalty which a world of sinners would have endured."⁴ The sacrifice of the one for the many, of the holy for the unholy, freely made by Christ as the Head and Representative of mankind,⁵ would be a

¹ 1 Peter iii. 18.

² 1 Peter ii. 24.

³ Isaiah liii. 10.

⁴ Hodge, *System of Theology*,

vol. ii. p. 471.

⁵ Dörner, *Hist. of Develop. of Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, vol. iii. div. 2, p. 232.

sufficient vindication of law, the universal sway of which God permits nothing to break through. But while this theory is scripturally true, it is not all the truth of Scripture concerning the sacrifice of Christ. It limits the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice to that only which was typified by the *trespass offerings* of the old economy, and leaves completely out of view what was foreshadowed in the *sin offerings*. While violated law might be vindicated by the trespass offering, only by the blood of the sin offering could transgression be atoned or ended. What Jehovah must exact as penalty, He may not, yea will not, accept as atonement. That is the difference between all the religions of the natural man, and the religion of the Bible. The former are based upon and proceed from the belief that Deity will be propitiated if only the penalty or a satisfaction can be paid; but the Bible teaches that no paying of the penalty, though law exacts it, will please God. Nothing will please God but sin atoned, covered, in fact exterminated; and this can be effected only when the life of the holy victim freely offered for the unholy suppliant is substituted IN him. Although, therefore, it is true according to Scripture that Christ bore to the uttermost, even to the cross, the penalty or consequences of human sin, and thereby vindicated law, it is manifest that a fuller and more comprehensive view of the Divine sacrifice is required than that it was a satisfaction of the Divine justice.

The conceptions of Judge, and of King, do not exhaust the relations which God holds towards man.

The impartial Judge and righteous King is the faithful Creator, and Father of our spirits. The Divine sacrifice instead of being represented in Scripture as the condition upon which our forgiveness is obtained, is set forth as the medium by which forgiveness is declared and brought to us. Instead of being moved to forgive either by man's appeal or by Christ's intercession, God, in infinite pity, "sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved;" "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."¹ This eternal life is God's own life—the life of the Eternal Spirit through Whom Christ offered Himself to God, that this life might be communicated to us through His sacrifice. So, just as water from a pure fountain cleanses the foul and muddy stream, just as healthy blood cleanses out and expels disease, so the spring of Christ's sacrifice is efficacious to purify from all iniquity and cleanse from all sin. In the relation, therefore, not of an external Judge and Governor of the world altogether apart from it, but of the Creator of the world, the actual principle of life in nature, and the Father of a race degraded and suffering because of their sin, we must look for the source of all atonement.

Our own relation to sin either in ourselves or in others, helps us to realise how infinite holiness and love must be affected by it. If evil painfully affects us, it will affect a being infinitely purer and tenderer than we are, similarly, but in the degree of infinitude.

¹ John iii. 15-17.

The pain and shame of sin can never be felt in all their keenness by the sinner himself. When sin breaks out in a family, its burden falls most heavily upon the purest nature in it. When it broke out in the universe, the holiest and most loving being most realised the curse of it, and God as God, thus became the bearer of a burden which no creature could bear. The moral Ruler of the universe is thus revealed in relation to human sin as not merely omnipotent, self-centred, majestic, inflicting the penalties due to transgression that He may vanquish and overwhelm it, but as Himself submitting to the consequences of sin, by enduring because of it that which no sinner can endure, and into which the angels desire to look. He is the only One who can perfectly comprehend the significance of sin, and therefore the only One who can perfectly bear its weight. And so the moment sin was committed, yea the moment it was conceived, it was matched by redemption; for God's infinite comprehension of its meaning, His infinite passion under it as an intolerable thing, enabled Him alone of all beings to forgive the sinner, and upon the basis of His own sorrow for it to work out eventually in history, as already in His eternal thought, a complete salvation from it. Thus from the postulate of Deity we may deduce the Incarnation; for the creation of the world involves its redemption from the evil which has invaded it. He who made man in His own image will at any cost to Himself endeavour to save man from his sin and its consequences; but the only symbol

which can adequately set forth the relation of the Creator to the sins of His creatures, is the Divine sacrifice of Christ. So He who is everlastingly giving Himself for the service of His universe, is revealed in the Old Testament as pitying their infirmities and as being grieved for the hardness of their heart, and in the New Testament is disclosed as seeking to vanquish their obduracy by enduring, in His invincible patience and love, a suffering and sorrow *for* sin such as sinners never could endure *in* it. It is in this direction we must look, if we would apprehend—

Secondly—The Nature of the Divine Sacrifice in Jesus Christ our Lord.

From what we have already learned, we shall not be inclined—in inquiring into the nature of the sacrifice of Christ—to restrict our views wholly to His ministry upon earth. His death upon the cross was the consummation in time of the Divine sacrifice ; but for its commencement, we must look to that point in Christ's pre-existence, when it became necessary to set forth His father's mind and will in regard to sin. St. Paul and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews seem to indicate a series of stages in the mysterious descent or humiliation through which He had to pass before He found the body which His Father had prepared for Him.¹ In all these stages delighting to do His will, He was making atonement as truly as when He cried upon His cross "It is finished." Nevertheless there must be a peculiar and distinctive efficacy in the

¹ Phil. ii. 5-8 ; Hebrews ii. 16.

sufferings which He endured, and in the death which He accomplished at Jerusalem, which lifts His atoning sacrifice far above the sacrificial types of the Law. Under the Law, the suffering of the victim was slight, and its death was only of value as liberating the blood in which was the life ; but according to the New Testament the sufferings and death of Christ are peculiarly efficacious. We are said through the fellowship of His *sufferings* to attain unto the resurrection of the dead, and through being baptised into His *death* to rise into newness of life.¹ The Apostolic witnesses never refer to these experiences as only incidental to His mission—as calamities in which He happened to be involved. They tell us plainly that His mission was to suffer and to die upon the cross ; and when we remember that He was the only one in human history whose suffering was not traceable to any fault in Himself which suffering could correct, or to any sin which it might cleanse away, it becomes difficult and perhaps impossible to account for His sufferings in any other way than Scripture has accounted for them. They were absolutely essential for His Divine ministry of redemption, indispensable in the life of One who would declare God's "righteousness for the remission of sins that are past," that God "might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."²

For the sufferings of Christ were not such as are common to man ; they were peculiar to Himself. He had indeed more than an ordinary share of the cross

¹ Phil. iii. 10-11 ; Rom. vi. 3-5.

² Romans iii. 25, 26.

which the Fall had laid upon humanity, but in addition to that cross which He assumed, He had to bear His own. Hunger, and thirst, and toil; disappointment of high hopes; rejection of pure love; the torture of a most revolting death, do not explain, do not even touch the mystery of His passion. In enduring these He proved the reality of His fellowship in our suffering, but the fellowship of His suffering which we are to know in order to attain unto His resurrection is another matter. That meant a travail of soul which the Lamb of God must endure in order to bear away the sin of the world. To apprehend correctly this suffering, we must have a proper conception of the sufferer. There was no sorrow like unto the Saviour's sorrow, because there never was any one like unto the Saviour Himself. His sufferings were exceptional and transcendent, because the Sufferer was unique. Susceptibility to suffering is exactly proportioned to the volume and quality of life in those who are called to endure it. A sorrow which falls lightly upon the little child may break the heart of its mother. So when we realise who and what Christ was, we discover how essential was suffering to the fulfilment of His mission; for as soon as He awoke to its significance, His mission became a passion, involving Him in a life which we could not live, and in a death which we could not die.

For example, He suffered through His innocence, which was outraged every moment by the sinfulness of His surroundings. No one but He could realise the kind of world He lived in, for its wickedness, and waste, and

desolation were hid from every eye but His own. No sinful man, it has been truly said, "can understand the kind of being he is in himself; even his remorse and misery are imperfectly appreciated by him." This disordered world suits our sinful state, and life in it is bearable, as existence in a lazar-house is bearable to a leper. What must this world and the race that inhabit it have been to One who was holy, harmless, and undefiled? To be holy in a world where all else are evil—to have its wickedness and wretchedness confronting Him at every step—must have involved suffering. True comprehension of sin implies agony for it, and the agony will always be proportioned to the absence of sin from the soul. The holier the soul, the truer is the comprehension of sin, and the greater is the passion because of it. His very presence as one perfectly sinless in a sinful world, involved Him in a suffering because of sin immeasurably transcending any penalty that could be inflicted upon sinners; and so because He knew no sin He had to bear it.

For along with His sinlessness we must consider His sympathy. Purity gave Him insight into the significance of human guilt and misery, and love made Him assume the full weight of them. He bore our griefs, He carried our sorrows: on Him were laid all our iniquities, not by compulsion, and yet from a necessity which the words compassion and pity are too feeble to express. Just because He never experienced the sickness of disease or the pangs of remorse, He endured in His compassion far more than those

who were subject to them. In the tenderness of more than human sensibility He felt the loathsomeness of leprosy more keenly than the leper, and the pangs of remorse were more painful to His pure pity than to the conscience-stricken traitor. One with God in His holiness, one with us in His absolute sympathy, the sorrows of all men were flowing constantly in upon Him to carry, and the sins of all men were being laid upon Him to bear. He alone caught the true impression of human sin and sorrow which our natures are too gross and dull to receive. So feeling perfectly one with us in our wretchedness, He laboured and wrestled, and made supplication with strong crying and tears; yea, through His death made prevailing intercession; even as the Holy Spirit under our burden "maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."¹

It is a fact in human experience, that no one ever truly comforted the sorrowful, without sharing to some extent their sorrow. No one ever effectually prayed for others, without feeling weak in their feebleness, sore in their trial, or miserable under their sin. Just so far as we pass into the lives of others, and assume their load, are we able to help them. Therefore, it was out of this travail of soul, this absolute sympathy

¹ Romans viii. 26. Dr. Macleod Campbell's theory of Christ's death as a confession of human sin to God is to this extent true. No one but Christ could confess our sin and utter the whole truth concerning it as He did in suffer-

ing for it. He alone, as Himself sinless, could glorify God in His condemnation of sin, and so His death is not only a confession, but the most powerful of all intercessions for the race whose Head He is.

whereby Christ was afflicted in all our affliction, that His power to heal, to forgive, and to redeem proceeded. The power to heal and forgive was a sovereign power, but it was the reverse of being impassive. He had, it is true, only to speak in order to deliver and pardon ; but how much He must have felt before He could utter the word of pardon or of help, no sinner can conceive. A miracle of help implied the giving away of Himself in pity : power whenever He healed went out of Him, so that living for others meant in His case dying daily. It was by taking them upon Himself that He took away men's diseases ; it was because He alone felt perfectly with and for the victims of sin that He was conscious of Divine authority to forgive the sinner. And so His power to save from sin was rooted in His infinite capacity to suffer for it ; and the atoning efficacy of His sacrifice lay in the agony of His love.

That His sufferings were thus essentially vicarious and for sin, is plainly indicated by the fact, that what troubled His soul was not the hardships which He encountered in the discharge of His duties, nor even the wrongs and indignities which were inflicted upon Him. He bore all these in silence ; but His soul was troubled when He groaned in spirit at the grave of Lazarus,¹ when He wept with lamentations over Jerusalem,² and when He cried in the hour of seeming triumph in the courts of the temple, "Father save Me from this hour."³ So when that trouble of soul reached its climax in Gethsemane, it was not con-

¹ John x. 33.

² Luke xix. 41.

³ John xii. 27.

sideration for Himself that brought the agony upon Him. The mystery of that experience we can only contemplate, as did the disciples when half awake, in dim uncertain light, and as at the distance of a stone's cast—but we see clearly enough to discern that it was not just as a man that Christ on that occasion paid His tribute to human suffering. Were that so, Gethsemane would be a stumbling block to our faith in Him even as an example. Good men do not dread dying, and before as well as after Him, God's saints have met deaths as cruel as His with calm resignation. Some one whom I cannot remember has contrasted Socrates, who took without emotion the cup which was to send his soul on into a state of the nature of which he was ignorant, and of the existence of which he had only a presentiment, with Christ who, knowing that He was passing from man's injustice to God's gentleness, wrestled before His death as exceeding sorrowful to die. The two lives are, indeed, representative lives, and yet they are found separated by an infinite distance when we test them by the comprehension, insight, sensitivity, which they display. Alone of all who have been and are and will be subject to mortality, Christ knew the full meaning of death to man, and as He confronted His own death, there was revealed to Him the complete significance of the guilt of those who had brought it about. It has been truly said that the death of Jesus "is the highest revelation of the Divine life in man, in conflict with the evil of the world,"¹ but the only One by whom that

¹ Prof. E. Caird, *The Evolution of Religion*, vol. ii. p. 191.

revelation has ever been fully comprehended, was the Saviour Himself. Through that one crime which His enemies were about to perpetrate, there was disclosed to Him the full significance of human sin in its totality. Looking into the abyss of evil thus opened up, the Holy Spirit of God and the sinful spirit of man were brought face to face as they had never before been. And the result was the agony, a sorrow like unto no man's sorrow, a passion which could not bend His will, strong in its invincible holiness, but which broke His heart as more than humanity could bear.

In that supreme act of suffering, all possible suffering was gathered up into one unique and intolerable pang. The groanings of humanity and the travail of creation were all concentrated in the passion of the Son of God, the Son of Man. Terribly real in its torture and its desolation, it was after all symbolic of a more awful reality. Through the broken heart of the Son—the rending of the veil in the great temple of the universe,—we catch a glimpse of the mystery of the Holy of Holies into which the angels adoringly look. We see upon what the great altar of the mercy seat is founded, namely, the faithfulness of the Creator. Infinite in feeling, in comprehension, in holiness, in love, all our sins and their consequences are assumed by Him as His burden. The greatest sufferer for sin, seeing He alone understands it, He has power to forgive and to redeem its victims. He is able, in virtue of what He endures, to save to the uttermost from it ; so He will vanquish sin, not by overwhelming it with penalty, nor by annihilating the

opposition of the sinner by irresistible force, but by moving the heart and conscience of the sinner to hate it as He does. The enduring meekness of holy love violated by sin, is a power infinitely greater than any force that could annihilate it. When we see omnipotence seeking "to overcome all opposition only by bearing its utmost expression," the evil of our sin becomes intolerable to us, and its power sinks exhausted before the power of Divine patience. By enduring the very worst it can inflict, Christ disarms and annuls it, for the revelation of His passion in which our forgiveness springs becomes grace of true repentance in every soul that receives it. It evolves

"The moral qualities of man—how else?
To make him love in turn, and be beloved,
Creative and self sacrificing too,
And thus eventually God-like." ¹

And so, *Thirdly*—*The effect and end of the Divine sacrifice* is the remission of sin and the reconciliation of all things to God. Remission of sin according to the teaching of Scripture does not mean simply the removal of a penalty or the wiping out of a debt. Such a remission may indicate sentimental weakness in the person who forgives, and it may lead to very immoral results by making transgression an easy matter. Scripture knows of no forgiveness which merely remits a penalty. By its very nature forgiveness affects the heart. It is always intended to destroy the sinful impulse or motive in the person forgiven, and so prove

¹ Browning, *The Ring and The Book*, "The Pope," 1378-1383.

the spring of a true repentance. "Christ saves us not from pain but from that which makes us flee from pain, He died to save us not from suffering, but from death—a death which involves our liking that which is evil."¹ Now it has not been sufficiently set forth in our theologies—though it is implied in our forms of prayer—that true repentance in man has its source in the Divine nature. True repentance is a grace which we very properly ask the God of all grace to bestow upon us ("that it would please Thee to bestow upon us the grace of a true repentance"). It originates in the Divine sorrow for man's sinful condition, of which we have a revelation in Scripture as early as the prophecy of the Deluge,² and in the mission of Christ we have the revelation completed. Not that we are to regard the Divine sacrifice as a makeshift contrived to influence men's emotions for moral and spiritual ends: it was the natural and inevitable disclosure of the extent to which the Divine nature is affected by sin. We have already observed that the sufferings of Christ are never represented as having any value in moving God to forgive sin, seeing it was really God who endured them; but the forgiveness of God declared and brought to man by a suffering Messiah has immense value in changing man's mind in regard to sin, by drawing him into fellowship with Christ's sufferings and God's sorrow for sin.

So the first effect of the Divine sacrifice, is not to

¹ Hinton, *Man and his Dwelling Place*, pp. 219, 238.

² Genesis vi. 6, 7.

relieve us from the fear of punishment, but to condemn in us the love of sin and to reconcile us to the will of God. The infinite love of God revealed in Christ could be satisfied with nothing less ; for love is an attribute essentially ethical, which never can for its own gratification override the higher considerations of what is right and good. In pitying the sufferer, it has regard both to the real occasion or origin of the suffering, and the moral purpose which it may be made to serve. Even we cannot ignore the fact that there are worse evils than suffering, and that to wrong-doers suffering may be the greatest and only blessing. So while Divine love has soothing for suffering, it has indignation against sin. It is infinitely just, even as Divine justice is infinitely loving. Divine love can only desire what infinite justice demands. Both attributes condemn sin, and seek the salvation of the sinner. Both go forth after the sinner for his redemption, and both find their satisfaction in seeing the sinner saved from all unrighteousness, even though the suffering caused by his sin be used as the means of his sanctification. It is sin that is atoned, not suffering ; and suffering may, yea, does continue, when the sin has been forgiven and covered. As long as sin is unforgiven, there is a sense of alienation and of Divine wrath, even though no suffering follows transgression as its immediate penalty : but when sin is felt to be truly forgiven, all sense of alienation and of Divine wrath is destroyed. Then though suffering as its natural consequence may continue, its character is changed. It is no longer a curse

expressive of anger, it is transformed into a means of grace, a blessed discipline through which we outgrow the sin that caused it, as though it had never been.

So "what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh"—that is, weak not in itself, for it is perfect, but in its subjects whose carnal minds due to the Fall render its precepts and threatenings and promises a dead letter—"God, sending His own Son in the *likeness* of sinful flesh, and for sin," or, as an offering for sin—that is, in a nature truly human but sinless—"condemned sin in the flesh."¹ The Law could and did condemn *us* for sin, but it could not condemn sin *in* us; but Christ sinless in the likeness of sinful flesh condemned sin as unnatural and inhuman. Instead of being essential or inherent in our nature, He showed in His own person, that man invested in a true body and reasonable soul can be holy, harmless, and undefiled. Then by His sufferings in the flesh for sin, He condemned sin as essentially hostile to God and man, as bent always and only upon the destruction of what is good. By revealing not only the immeasurable loss to man because of it, but its infinite cost to God, He taught us the real meaning of it, and unsealed the founts of Divine sorrow which melt our obduracy into penitence. When the infinite love that bore our sins is shed abroad in human hearts it destroys the sinful impulse, and by making us sorrow for sin as God sorrows over it, hate it as God hates it, and turn from

¹ Romans viii. 3.

it as God turns from it, it inaugurates a new life, in which the law of God as the expression of His own life is no longer outside and beyond us, but has become within us our most powerful inspiration.

“For judgment I am come into this world,” said Christ,¹ and truly by His coming, and especially by the manner in which men sent Him out of the world, sin was judged as it had never been. No Divine retribution with which the wickedness of men or nations has been visited, can beget such convictions of the heinousness and horror of sin as are produced by the revelation of the Cross of Christ. In that revelation we begin to know God, and to understand ourselves. We are made to realise how inexpressibly inhuman the race of which we are members have become, and yet while thus self-condemned, we adore God in Christ for the revelation of what He desires and is able to make us. He who suffered by us and for us even to the death of the cross, in His love is mighty to save, to lift us out of our sin and to make us loving sons of God like Himself. For so close is the relation which unites the destiny of each of us with that of the Son of Man as our Head, that His sacrifice includes and gives efficacy to our surrender in penitence to God. And thus in His dying we die, and in His resurrection we are raised unto life eternal.

Therefore we must not limit the efficacy of His sacrifice to the negative effect of condemning and destroying in us the sinful habit and the sinful impulse, for there are positive results which from the first our

¹ John ix. 39.

Lord had in view. He came, by revealing His own unity with God His Father, to assure us that in spite of our broken unity with God, we are still capable of becoming one with Him. That broken unity He came to reknit, by communicating to us the Divine eternal life which He had in Himself. Only Son of God by generation, "as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God."¹ We have already seen how conscious He was all through His ministry, that it was only through the apparent annihilation of Himself that He could fulfil His mission. Out of His absolute self-abnegation, out of His single life crushed in death, would spring the multiplication of Himself in the endlessly increasing kingdom of His Father.² Thus He "emptied Himself"³ that the people who were to be begotten of Him "might be filled with all the fulness of God." In His doctrine, in His example, and especially in His death, He revealed the law which must be observed by all who desire "to keep their life unto life eternal," the law of self-sacrifice. He has shown us what it is for man to be as a creature made in the image of God. Man's true life must be God's own life, yet that life was revealed in Christ's life of utter self-abnegation. We only begin to live when we mind the things which Christ minded, and walk according to Christ's rule, "He that loveth his life shall lose it: and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal."⁴ By

¹ John i. 12.

² John xii. 23, 24.

³ Phil. ii. 7.

⁴ All the evangelists have recorded this saying, which, probably as the central truth of

the surrender of the present life, we attain to a fuller and higher; by the sacrifice of self, the true self will be realised. There is no other way possible of fulfilling our true destiny. "It is only with self-renunciation that true life can begin."¹ "There is but one sole virtue in the world, the eternal sacrifice of self."² If we would be honoured of the Father as Christ the Son is honoured, we must serve in the same spirit and after the same fashion as Christ the Son has served.³

The appeal which Christ makes to us through His sacrifice is not addressed to our pity, because He was

Christ's teaching, was very often upon His lips. Four times at least, in different connexions, and with different shades of meaning, He is recorded to have repeated it. Thus, when warning His disciples of the troubles and family divisions and hostilities which following Him would entail, He said "He that *findeth* his life shall *lose* it; and he that *loseth* his life for My sake shall *find* it" (Matt. x. 39). Again, addressing the disciples after His rebuke of St. Peter, He said, "Whosoever would *save* his life shall *lose* it, and whosoever shall *lose* his life for My sake ('and the Gospel's' Mark viii. 35), shall *find* (Mark and Luke ix. 24, 'save') it." (Matt. xvi. 25). Towards the close of His ministry, in predicting the judgments which would fall upon the world at the unexpected coming of the Son of Man, He reminded them of the same law. "Whosoever shall seek

to *gain* his life, shall *lose* it; but whosoever shall *lose* his life shall *preserve* it," or bring it to a new birth (Luke xvii. 33). And once again in the day of His apparent triumph in the temple, when with soul stirred by the request of the Greeks to see Him, He prophesied of the harvests which would spring from the seed of His life, cast into the earth to die, He said, "He that *loveth* his life *loseth* it; and he that *hateth* his life in this world shall *keep* it unto life eternal" (John xii. 24). There may be a progression of thought in the four sayings, but the central truth is unmistakable. To *find* life in our own way, to wish to *preserve* it, to seek to *gain* it, to *love* it, say of it, it is all or the best I can have, is to *lose* it altogether.

¹ Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*.

² George Sand.

³ John xii. 26.

the greatest of sufferers, nor is it addressed to our admiration because He was the greatest of heroes. He addresses it to our conscience as the interpreter of the great moral law that governs us, the revealer of our true life. The ideal is indeed high ; it is not only sublime, it is Divine ; but it has been realised in Him. And once that it is disclosed to us, we consent that it is just what we were made for, and what we ought to be. We confess that God would cease to be God, and we should cease to be human, if He demanded or we could be satisfied with less. The renunciation involved is not the abandonment of what is sinful, for that is demanded by prudence and self-interest ; nor is it the ascetic renunciation of what is really human and natural, for that would be "spiritual suicide" ; it is the abnegation of self in every form of self-pleasing or self-advancement. It is the complete surrender or offering up of the whole being to the control of Christ, even as He offered Himself to God His Father, that we may be "imitators of God, as beloved children ; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell."¹ He did so, that He might both leave us an example and impart to us the disposition to imitate and follow Him. "Though he was rich" in the fulness of everything which constitutes our ideal of happiness, "yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich."² That is, rich in that spirit of charity in which the Divine

¹ Ephesians v. 2.² 2 Corinthians viii. 9.

blessedness consists, and which made Him count it a joy to pass from the highest extreme of glory, to the lowest extreme of humiliation, that He might fulfil His Father's will in meeting our terrible necessities.¹ All that is required of us is that we open our hearts "to receive" this grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. For just as they who love are sure to serve, and just as they who learn are sure to teach, so they who experience the "charity" of Christ will surely show it forth to all who need it.

So the life unto which we are redeemed by Christ is His own life of sacrifice. Sacrifice, instead of being a temporary expedient to secure some good or avert some evil, is both the motive and ultimate goal of our religion as life eternal. It is the supreme blessedness of being—the blessedness essential to the Being of infinite love. For as there is no one in the universe from whom God can receive anything, seeing all things are absolutely His own, His blessedness must consist in everlastingly dispensing what is peculiarly His own. By bestowing upon us all that we need He has given us the great blessedness of receiving; and by imparting to us the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ He has conferred upon us the higher and greater blessedness of giving, and so He has made it possible for us to enter into His joy. According to the eternal law, it is only as we communicate that we receive the blessing. We possess of it only what we share; we have of it only what we use. To refuse, or to neglect to extend to others the forgiveness which we

¹ Philippians ii. 5-8; Hebrews xii. 2.

have received, the comfort which we have experienced, or the peace which we enjoy, is to lose them altogether. So if Christ through His sacrifice has brought to us salvation, salvation is sacrifice.

And this is a higher, nobler, worthier Gospel for humanity than that of Altruism, at least as it is popularly expounded and applied. The Altruism of modern romance lacks both strength of motive and purity of aim; even as expressed in some of our highest poetry it seems unable to lose sight or even grip of self. When praying to reach

“That purest heaven, be to other souls
A cup of strength in some great agony,”

it seems to be at best like the true Buddhist arhat,¹ selfishly unselfish. Moreover, we can never truly live for others if we only trust to our own love of them for inspiration. That must be drawn from the source of a nobler and higher love. In ordaining His apostle to the ministry of pure love, our Lord did not demand, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou these, my sheep, my lambs, whom thou art to feed and tend?” but “Simon, son of Jonas, *lovest thou Me more than these?*” It was the demand He had already made, “He that loveth father or mother more than Me cannot be My disciple,” and here as then He made it in the name of His Father, who in revealing His law had demanded, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and

¹ A man who through his own efforts to be good is close upon attaining perfection, and so upon winning Nirvana as his reward.

with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." For it is only in the higher service of God that our fellow-man is truly served, and we cannot love our brother as we should, till we are constrained by the love of Christ. This is His commandment, "that we all love one another as He hath loved us." Without this constraint and dominance of the supreme love of Christ, Altruism will prove only a morality ; any self-denial there is in it will be tainted with expediency, and never prove the spirit and joy of life. It is only through the constraint of the love of Christ that self-denial becomes self-oblivion, in which we are free to give ourselves up for others, as He, constrained by His Father's love, gave Himself up for us. In doing so He was not conscious of any act of renunciation. He did not feel that He was abandoning any good thing His Father had given Him ; certainly He did not despise or throw any good thing away. He was only able to let them slip at the call of love, in the delight of doing His Father's will. He simply forgot His own felicity in seizing the opportunity of lightening the misery of others, and so, merging His personal life in the life of God, He realised God's blessedness. "There never was upon earth a being so deep in His peace, so pure in His joy, so essentially blessed as He was. The deepest in painful sacrifices for others, He lived at the highest pitch of beatitude."¹ The most precious legacy which He could bequeath to His disciples was His "peace."² His largest prayer for those whom He loved was that they

¹ Bushnell, *The Vicarious Sacrifice*, p. 16.

² John xiv. 27.

might have His "joy fulfilled in themselves," and yet that was the peace, that was the joy, of the most troubled and sorrowful life which the world has ever seen.

And so it has been with all who have "known" or experienced the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. In proportion as they have appropriated His love through devotion to Him, there has been revealed to them the real worth and glory of life. St. Paul, for example, whose life from his conversion may be described as one long sacrifice, never for a moment hesitated as to the course which he had chosen to follow. He simply could not help himself. "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him;" "that I may know Him, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death."¹ To the worldly-wise of his own or of any other generation, to the "men who will praise us when we do well to ourselves,"² he seemed a fool and a fanatic who was missing life altogether, in so trampling upon all chances of promoting his own interests. Very different, however, is the verdict of history upon him. It is easy indeed to conceive of a happier life than his was, but it is difficult to conceive of a nobler. Between the kind of life which we are tempted to choose for ourselves at first, and that which we at last extol in others, there is a mighty difference. To the youth beginning life, nothing seems so attractive as ease,

¹ Philippians iii. 7-11.

² Psalm xlix. 13.

leisure, self-enjoyment; to the same being when life on earth is ending, all these have lost their fascination, and he would thankfully barter them for one opportunity of enduring hardness, or of making a sacrifice for the sake of duty. St. Paul could not live otherwise than he chose to live, without being tormented by the remorseful discovery that he had ruined his felicity and thrown away life's grandest opportunity. As it was, he not only finished, he ran his course, with joy. In pouring forth his life as a libation upon the sacrifice and service of the Church, for the redemption of a wretched world, he experienced more real joy than the most prosperous of selfish men ever derived from all the luxuries and pleasures they could covet.

It is manifest that sin is atoned, covered, ended, in all in whom the mind of Christ has been substituted for their own selfish wills. Love is the fulfilling of the law. That Christ has communicated this mind or spirit to humanity, not only St. Paul and the noble army of martyrs, but the Church which He has founded are witnesses. True, it doth not yet appear what the Church shall be; mortal hath not put on immortality, and the Church in too many respects is most unlike its glorious Head. Yet, since He has called His Church into existence, the world is not, and never can be again, what it was before. The spirit of Christ's sacrifice is influencing not only individuals, but communities, to accept and magnify the law by which the innocent suffers willingly for the guilty, and by which the saint works out his

own salvation in labouring for the undeserving, and in dying for the redemption of his enemies. Society is based upon the understanding that the good must bear the cross of the evil and come between them and the full consequences of their wrong-doing. All institutions for the relief of the distressed, for the reclamation of the lost, and for the restoration of the ruined ; yea, every purifying and regenerating influence that is traceable in the world, is the fruit of the sacrifice of Christ. Progress in realising the Divine ideal may, indeed, appear to be very slight, but His spirit is affecting all life with sufficient power to justify the prophecy, that He will eventually reign supreme in every domain of human thought and action. Had humanity never fallen, it would have been His, as the "First born" through whom and unto whom all things were created,¹ and now by the sacrifice and ransom of His life for our race, He is slowly but surely winning back His dominion and recovering what had been lost.

The fact that we are living and moving and having our being in a spiritual atmosphere saturated with ideas of sacrifice such as never entered the mind of any believer in its efficacy before Christ suffered, is in itself an indication that He has fulfilled all that the universal rite of sacrifice pointed to and predicted. Very different are the conceptions which man naturally forms of sacrifice, from the reality of sacrifice revealed in Christ. What to man seems to be the equivalent of loss, the

¹ Colossians i. 15-17.

reluctant surrender of some good to procure something better, is in Christ disclosed as the *summum bonum*, the fulness of the Divine joy.¹ So we need not wonder that, as far back as we can trace revelation, God, instead of demanding sacrifice from men, is represented as working to bring near to them His salvation. That salvation He has now so revealed, that the ends of the world are receiving it. As a revelation it is final, but the interpretation of it is only proceeding, and notwithstanding all the experience gained during eighteen centuries, we still know and prophesy concerning it only in part. The systems of religious thought which we have outgrown, the theologies that have become obsolete, warn us against concluding that in our cherished theories we have attained to perfect understanding of the fact of the Saviour's sacrifice. The framers and expounders of those relinquished systems did not sufficiently realise the facts of the Gospel, and of man's moral and spiritual consciousness. Nor could they recognise what we have to reckon with, in the other Divine side-lights of science and philosophy with which God is ever testing our theological systems. Inadequate though they were, their systems served their time, and were moving powers in the Church for good. The chief of them, founded upon the supremacy

¹ "I think this is the authentic sign and seal
Of Godship, that it ever waxes glad,
And more glad, until gladness blossoms, bursts
Into a rage to suffer for mankind
And recommence at sorrow."

BROWNING, *Balaustion's Adventure*.

of God the Almighty King and Righteous Judge, bore witness to essential truth, and produced not only heroic confessors, but generations of holy and helpful men. The theology of this age is founded upon the Fatherhood of God, but unless we include in that Fatherhood His eternal sovereignty and inexorable justice, we may be misled into drawing from it inferences or conclusions which are both dishonouring to God and degrading to humanity. The probability that our present theology will be modified need not painfully concern us, for the spirit of truth will lead the Church from knowledge to knowledge, and as long as the essential fact of God's relationship to us is firmly apprehended, we may be confident that no modification of our theology will subvert or endanger the faith. "We have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto we do well that we take heed,"¹ that God the Creator, is Jehovah the Redeemer, of man. The Eternal, Almighty Sovereign of the universe, the Righteous Judge of all, is the everlasting surety of all who believe in His Son. For "when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman," that is, involved in our nature; "born under the law," that is, involved in its penalty;" that He might redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."² So "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself."³ "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God hath sent His only begotten Son into the world, that

¹ 2 Peter i. 19.² Galatians iv. 4.³ 2 Corinth. v. 19.

we might live through Him.”¹ That love which in Christ was seen to do and suffer for us the very uttermost—even to passing through the gates of death to save us—is bound to disarm and vanquish the very uttermost of human enmity and hatred of God.

The Householder of the parable said of the husbandmen, “They will reverence my Son.”² And after mankind had slain and cast forth God’s well-beloved Son, they did begin to reverence Him. When they looked upon Him whom they had pierced, they were themselves pierced with penitential sorrow for the evil they had done. They saw from His holy nature what was the original measure and capacity of their own, and not only by contrast with their sinful nature, but by their rejection of Him, they learned what a fearful thing their own nature had become ; and in this Divine regret which seized them “they were taken captive by the Lord’s servant unto the will of God.”³ So “now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ;”⁴ “you, being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unreprouable before Him,”⁵ so washed, so cleansed, so sanctified that not to do the will of God would be a hardship. Thus God is becoming to men what He is to His beloved Son, and men who receive not the grace of God in vain, will eventually be one in the Father

¹ 1 John iv. 9. ² Matt. xxi. 38. ³ 2 Tim. ii. 26, cp. Revised Version.

⁴ Ephes. ii. 13, Revised Version. ⁵ Coloss. i. 21, Revised Version.

and in the Son. For “the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou has sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.”¹

UNTO HIM THAT LOVED US, AND WASHED US FROM OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BLOOD, AND HATH MADE US KINGS AND PRIESTS UNTO GOD AND HIS FATHER; TO HIM BE GLORY AND DOMINION FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.

POSTSCRIPT

In our survey of religions other than Christian I have not directly included the great religion of Rome. We have been considering only one feature in all those religions—sacrificial worship—in relation to one article of our faith, the sacrifice of Christ; and though the sacrificial system of Rome was very comprehensive, it presented no features additional to those which have already occupied our attention. All the ideas and conceptions of sacrifice elsewhere set forth were, however, clearly exhibited in it. The Roman was the most polytheist of all ancient religions, for it imported all the deities of other peoples on which it could lay its hands, and adopted and naturalised every cult which it could discover. In addition, it created new deities whenever

¹ John xvii. 22, 23.

some extraordinary occurrence emerged which seemed to render it necessary or desirable to provide them. Consequently, the Roman religion may be said to have summed up and concentrated all forms of heathen belief and worship, so that in coming into conflict with Rome, Christianity really found its first Armageddon.

Roman ceremonial worship was certainly very elaborate and minute, and made very extensive demands upon the time and the resources of the people. Public and private life had to be conducted according to a system most rigidly enforced by the Pontifical College, and no important public undertaking could be proceeded with, yea, no private pursuit could be begun, without the assistance and the offices of the diviners being first secured properly to "*inaugurate*"¹ it. Its calendar was red with redundance of festivals in honour of particular gods, of national events, and of natural seasons. It prescribed such annual celebrations as the Feralia, in which the dead were worshipped and feasted by offerings at their tombs; and as the Lemuria, in which the land was purified, and the evil spirits were exorcised with great solemnity from the homes. It exacted an enormous amount of animal slaughter for purposes of augury, and even of human beings, as far down as the days of Hadrian, for various ends.² Expiations were frequently demanded, not for moral offences, but for ceremonial mistakes and breaches of order. The doctrine of *opus operatum* dominated all

¹ The etymology of the word tells its story.

² Comp. *Marius the Epicurean*, by W. Pater, vol. ii. pp. 51-53.

these observances, for, provided the ceremony was correctly performed, the intention was considered to be of little importance; yet a single mistake was believed to be fatal, and the whole function had to be begun anew. All these sacrificial ceremonies were religious, not in our sense of the word, as binding men to obey the will of Deity; they were performed in the spirit, and with the intention of the barbarians, of binding the gods to further the interests and the wishes of men.

Indeed, it was in the religion of cultured Rome that the idea of making the gods subserve the good of men received its highest expression. If Rome borrowed from nearly every other religion what it could, it was with the definite purpose of applying what it adopted to very different uses. Elsewhere religion was a natural growth, never dissociated from, but nourished by belief as represented in the popular mythology; in Rome religion was a manufactured ceremonial devised and established for the maintenance of the State. As long as the observances required by law were properly attended to, the people were free to believe what they pleased. Elsewhere the gods were regarded with affection or reverence, but in Rome the one supreme object of reverence and worship was the Roman State, and all the gods—even the greatest of them—were only its officials and ministers. It was solely for ends of government that the deities of other nations were recognised; they were domiciled in Rome very much with the same intention which led the Mexicans to imprison the idols of conquered tribes to prevent them

escaping to help their vanquished votaries. Even Jupiter Maximus was subordinated to the interests of the Capitol which he guarded. Accordingly Mommsen has told us¹ that "Roman religion in all its details was simply a reflection of the Roman State, so that when changes occurred in the constitution of the State they were followed by similar changes in the institutions of religion." Religion was designedly employed to promote the stability of Rome, and the gods as truly as men were under rule to extend and establish its authority.

It seems to us a very profane conception of the relations subsisting between gods and men ; nevertheless in Rome it produced results not observable in other forms of polytheism. Elsewhere public religion was divorced from morality, but in Rome it was so controlled as to further such moral interests as are involved in good citizenship. It was this idea of rule, order, regularity, dominating every domain of public and private life, which gave Rome its marvellous vitality and strength. Law founded upon equity was the guiding genius of the makers of the great Roman world. The Platonic ideal set forth in *Crito* was attempted to be realised in Rome from the earliest. Cicero, in his book *De Legibus*, is the expounder of its fundamental principle, "that man is born for justice, that law and equity are not established by opinion, but by nature." The appeal, therefore, was directed to conscience, not to expediency. So as civilisation advanced "stern rule expanded into

¹ *History of Rome*, chap. xii.

liberal jurisprudence," and law ripened into justice, while religion declined into gross superstition among the ignorant, and into unbelief among the educated.¹ And law, and society organised by it, was Rome's legacy to mankind. Its well-compacted system of jurisprudence was assumed and codified under Justinian almost without alteration. For "the immutable principles of justice had been so clearly discerned by the inflexible rectitude of the Roman mind, and had been so sagaciously applied by the wisdom of her great lawyers, that Christianity was content to acquiesce in these statutes, which she might despair, except in some respects, of rendering more equitable."²

So Rome as powerfully as Greece influenced the development of Christianity. The organisation of the Roman State was reproduced in the Latin or Western Church, and the formulation of its doctrine was manifestly affected by the genius of Roman law. Greece gave to Christianity its unrivalled language, rendering possible its wide extension over the civilised world; and Greece also helped considerably by her sublime philosophy to mould the Christian theology. Originally, so closely associated as to be almost one, the thought of Greece and Rome operated upon Christianity in different directions, and with different results. In the East theological speculation was occupied chiefly with the nature of God and the Person of Christ, in the

¹ Merivale, *Conversion of the Roman Empire*, Lect. iv. p. 74.

² Milman, *Hist. Latin Chris-*

tianity, book iii. ch. v. vol. ii. p. 11; see also Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, ch. xlv. vol. v. pp. 257-327.

West it was exercised with the facts of sin and the Divine plan of salvation. While the West accepted without modification the Eastern theory of the Trinity, it worked out independently for itself its theory of the Atonement. The Eastern theory of atonement was, as we have observed, based upon the idea of redemption by ransom from the captivity of Satan, to deliver those whom he had vanquished. The Western theory was founded upon the Roman doctrine of obligation and the law of debt and penalty, and any one acquainted with the Roman system of law will have no difficulty—as Milman and Maine remind us¹—in discovering how the master mind of Anselm should have defined sin as *Non aliud peccare quam Deo non redditur debitum*, and should have answered his solemn question, *Cur Deus Homo?* by formulating his theory of sufficient satisfaction for human guilt, freely provided by Christ in enduring the death which He did not deserve for any sin of His own.

Upon the elucidation of these very interesting themes we cannot enter. We have had to deal not with the development of Christian doctrine, but with the Divine preparation for Christianity. By the nature of the subject we have been limited to such scattered hints of that providential discipline as we could find along only one line of observation. In pre-Christian and non-Christian religions, when they are examined in the clear light which we now enjoy, will be found

¹ Maine, *Ancient Law*, 5th ed., pp. 355 seq. ; Milman, *Latin Christianity*, Introduction, p. 5.

many other prophecies of the Gospel. Other beliefs than those connected with their sacrificial worship, expressed both in the mythology of the people and the philosophy of the learned, will be found reaching out after the cardinal articles of "the faith which was once delivered to the saints." What we have observed along the one line which we have tried to follow, is surely sufficient to convince us that those beliefs are not to be despised and disregarded by us, because they are expressed in what appear to be childish forms. It is only at first, for example, that we feel inclined to ridicule the Indian and Chaldean myth that the gods attained to deity, and that they created and still govern the world, by sacrifice. For under the regenerating influence of Gospel ideas the ancient myth becomes a symbol of the metaphysical truth, that the conception of creation, or of revelation, involves a voluntary limitation of Infinite Being which is of the essence of sacrifice. When we allow the wise men of Greece, of Rome, of Egypt, and of the great old East, to speak to us in their own tongue, and after their own fashion, we find that we cannot apply the word "*heathen*" to them in any offensive or contemptuous sense. The significance of the apostolic expression, "the common salvation,"¹ broadens and deepens its hold upon our comprehension. We find that, instead of being separated from them by an impassable gulf, "the continuity that knits us to them and makes them kindred is really unbroken, and is joined with links

¹ Jude v. 2.

that all bear the Great Workman's unmistakable design." ¹

We may be confident that this is true not only of those peoples among whom the tides of human thought rose high and pure, but also of those among whom we seem to find thought in only a feeble and turbid flow. We may believe

. . . "that in all ages
Every human heart is human,
That in even savage bosoms
There are longings, yearnings, strivings
For the good they comprehend not,
That the feeble hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God's right hand in that darkness
And are lifted up and strengthened." ²

More than thirty years ago Professor Max Müller instructed us how distinctive of Christianity is this great truth.³ He reminded us that *Humanity* is a word which we look for in vain in Aristotle or Plato; that the idea of mankind as one family, the children of God, is one of Christian growth; and consequently that the sciences of Mankind, and of Language, and of Religion without Christianity would never have sprung into life. It is to be feared that the Christian Church has not yet sufficiently realised the significance of this truth as taught by St. Paul in his sermon on Mars Hill,

¹ Mahaffy, *Problems in Greek History*, p. 197.

² Longfellow, Introduction to "Hiawatha."

³ *Lectures on the Science of Language*, first series, p. 81 seq., p. 118 seq.

and in his letters to the Galatian and the Colossian Churches.¹ Yet there it stands that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us. For in Him we live, and move, and have our being, as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring."² Forasmuch therefore as Jew and Gentile, Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, are the offspring of God, and forasmuch as His fatherly care does not depend upon our goodness, but upon His—for men are not less His children, not less the objects of His tenderness, that they have lost themselves through their own perversity—there devolves upon all whom He has found the imperative and blessed obligation of declaring the Gospel of Christ's Salvation to the ends of the earth. For the most ignorant and besotted of the millions who have not yet heard it—who are overwhelmed in amazement before the manifestations of nature, who worship the works of their own hands, who "mingle their devotions with cruelty, or who offer their passions to serve God"—are bone of our bone and are our brethren. God, who hath reconciled *us* to Himself through Christ, hath committed unto us *for their sakes* the word of reconciliation. To them we are ambassadors therefore on behalf

¹ Galatians iii. 28; Colossians iii. 11.

² Acts xvii. 26-28.

of Christ—as though God were intreating by us—that we may beseech them on behalf of Christ to be reconciled to God. For “Him who knew no sin, He made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”¹

¹ Cp. 2 Cor. v. 18-21, Revised Version.

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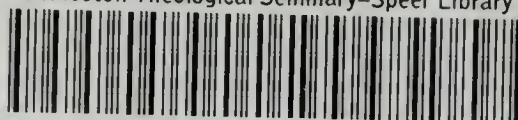
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